

A young boy with light brown hair, wearing a green baseball cap, a dark grey t-shirt, and a black fishing vest, is standing in a river. He is holding a fishing rod with both hands, looking towards the camera. The river water is calm and reflects the surrounding greenery. In the background, a large tree with extensive, exposed roots dominates the left side of the frame. The roots are thick and gnarled, extending into the water. The right side of the background is filled with dense green foliage and trees. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

# **HENDRICKS COUNTY**

## **PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

### **2011-2015**

*Prepared for:*  
**Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board**

HENDRICKS  
COUNTY



PARKS &  
RECREATION

## **MASTER PLAN: 2011 - 2015**

**February 11, 2011**

### **Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board**

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## Resolution Adopting the Master Plan

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WHEREAS, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board is aware of the parks and recreation needs of the residents of Hendricks County, Indiana; and,

WHEREAS, The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board is desirous of providing aesthetic and functional facilities and programs to the residents of Hendricks County to meet their needs; and,

WHEREAS, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board realizes the importance of a sound planning document in order to meet the needs of its citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board is continually aware of the value and importance of outdoor and leisure opportunities, programs and facilities to the future of the Hendricks County Park and Recreation Department, its programs, and to the residents of the county,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE HENDRICKS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD, by unanimous declaration, does adopt the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation 2011 to 2015 Master Plan, as its official plan for the growth and development of parks and recreation opportunities in Hendricks County, Indiana for the next five years. The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board is committed to an annual review and update of the goals and objectives of this Master Plan.

Passed and signed this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2011.

HENDRICKS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Mr. Gary Emsweller, President

# Assurance of Compliance

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## **Assurance of Compliance Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

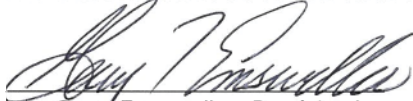
WHEREAS, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board is aware of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (43 CER 17); and,

WHEREAS, The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board desires to comply with the regulations contained within said Acts,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE HENDRICKS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD will abide by these guidelines and the Act.

Passed and signed this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2011.

HENDRICKS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

  
Mr. Gary Emsweller, President



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## Executive Summary - Introduction

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The primary purpose of this Comprehensive Master Plan is to create a clear set of goals, policies, strategies and actions that will provide direction to the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board for the development of recreational facilities in the near and distant future. While the recommendations in this plan are related to parks and recreation, careful consideration was given to broader county needs and goals including economic development, tourism, quality of life, connectivity, sustainability, health, and the environment.

The improvements and programs recommended in this plan are the result of a thorough assessment of the current HCPR facilities and programs and input from the community at large, special interest groups, community leaders, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board and the Master Plan Steering Committee. The planning team also reviewed other county and region planning studies and documents, and evaluated both the challenges to be met and opportunities available.

The recommendations are meant to guide the development of recreation resources and amenities for the next five years, and prioritize improvements to park and recreation programs and amenities that would most benefit the community.

As the county has experienced rapid growth that is projected to continue, this document also considers how that growth will impact the planning area in the future. The plan identifies strategies the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board can take in the immediate future to position the parks department to best meet the recreation needs of Hendricks County in the years to come.

### Methodology of the Planning Process

The master plan process was a collaborative effort of a master plan team made up of Hendricks Parks and Recreation Department Staff, a Master Plan Steering Committee and consultants Rundell Ernstberger Associates, and the Eppley Institute. The multistep process began in May 2010, and was concluded in February 2011. Included in the process were the following:

#### Investigation, inventory and analysis

A thorough review of existing and projected Hendricks County characteristics was conducted.

- Consideration of county demographics, growth, economy, recreation amenities, ecologic and environmental conditions, and history
- Review of county and region planning documents
- Assessment of current Hendricks County Parks and Recreation amenities, programming and administration

#### Public Input

Extensive public input was conducted to determine the recreation needs and desires of those who live and work in Hendricks County

- Series of stakeholder meetings with representatives of diverse special interest groups, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government entities serving Hendricks County
- Three public meetings
- Statistically representative community survey

# HCPR Mission and Goals

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## MISSION STATEMENT

**To lead in the protection of outstanding natural, historic and recreation areas, and linkages.  
To practice and promote the highest conservation ethics and  
provide environmental education and recreation opportunities  
to the community.  
To lead in enhancing quality of life and individual health  
while driving economic development  
to ensure a sustainable future for our community.**

## GOALS

### **Hendricks County Park and Recreation will strive to:**

Provide recreation amenities to meet the needs of Hendricks County residents

Promote the environmental health of Hendricks County

Model sustainable environmental practices

Promote the wise stewardship of natural resources

Adopt policies and management practices that lead by example in areas of conservation and environmental management

Provide programming opportunities to benefit the Hendricks County community

Promote the health and well-being of county residents

Offer recreation amenities and programs that are accessible to all regardless of age, race, ability or income

Lead the creation of physically interconnected county recreation system

Connect county residents to recreation opportunities and amenities

Serve as a county-wide recreation liaison

Communicate effectively with the public, county visitors, policy makers, partners, volunteers and employees

Attract visitors from outside Hendricks County

Use an administrative model that ensures that HCPR's financial and capital resources are sustainable over the long-term

Exemplify best practices in human resource management, budgeting, and communications

Ensure management plans, strategies, and analyses are sound, collaborative, and useful





## Community Review

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As part of the planning process the planning team conducted a comprehensive review and evaluation of county characteristics.

These included Hendricks County's:

- Demographics
- Historic and projected growth patterns
- Transportation network
- Education system
- Historic and cultural features
- Local Environment, climate, soils
- Employment trends
- Economic development trends
- Trail system
- Recreation amenities and facilities
- Other planning documents
  - Indianapolis MPO Regional Transit Study
  - 2006-2010 Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Master Plan
  - 2010 Avon Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan
  - 2008 - 2012 Brownsburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan
  - 2005-2009 Danville Parks and Recreation Master Plan
  - 2004-2009 Pittsboro Parks and Recreation Master Plan
  - 2001 - 2005 Avon Parks and Recreation Master Plan
  - 2008 Hendricks County Assessment Report and Findings

### Key Findings

- County growth puts pressure on existing recreation amenities and services, and will require additional amenities to adequately serve residents.
- The Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) identifies Hendricks County as one of 14 "critical counties" because it lacks the recommended recreation acreage of 20 acres per 1,000 population and has a population growth rate that is higher than 3.1%.
- Using the 2005 census as a basis for population, the Indiana SCORP showed a shortfall of 5,899 acres from the 7,012 acres of local and regional public recreation areas recommended for Hendricks County. Using the 2010 census population, the recommended local and regional public recreation land for Hendricks County increases to 7,997 acres.
- The increase in unemployment during the past few years suggests free and/or low cost recreation opportunities will be important to families struggling with reduced income.
- Although the population as a whole is aging, Hendricks County has a greater than average number of families with children under the age of 18, compared to the rest of the state.
- To meet the needs of both the aging population and young families, priority should be given to recreation amenities that appeal to a broad audience and are accessible to all ages.
- Partnerships between the schools and the county's various parks and recreation programs provide opportunities for shared resources.
- As school budgets have tightened, HCPR plays an increasingly important role in offering educational programming and/or inexpensive field trip opportunities to area schools.
- Given its current staffing levels, the parks department is not able to accommodate all requests for educational programs by schools or groups.



# The Park and Recreation System

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## Location and Planning Area

Hendricks County is located on the western border of Indianapolis. The county covers an area of approximately 408 square miles and is distinctly suburban along the eastern border and rural in the central and western sections of the county.

As the second-fastest growing county in Indiana, Hendricks County has experienced substantial growth over the past 20 years. During that time, the population has nearly doubled, from 75,717 in 1990 to a 2010-projected population of over 147,000.

Eleven incorporated towns exist within the county, five of which provide recreational resources to their local population with varying levels of service.

## History

Since its inception in 2000, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board and Department has worked to acquire land, develop infrastructure, pursue protection and preservation of natural lands within the county and provide recreational opportunities to the citizens of Hendricks County and beyond. Highlights of the department's ten-year history include:

- The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board was established in March of 2000.
- In 2001, HCPR was awarded a \$756,000 grant from the IDNR Heritage Trust Fund to purchase 232 acres of land for McCloud Nature Park.
- In 2002, the park system received an IDNR Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for McCloud Nature Park. The park was opened in May 2003.
- In 2008, HCPR received a \$665,000 Indiana Department of Transportation National Road Heritage Trail grant to fund land acquisition along the abandoned Vandalia railroad corridor in order to extend the trail within the county.
- The Park Foundation of Hendricks County was formed in January of 2009.
- In June of 2009, HCPR, the Indianapolis Airport Authority and US Fish and Wildlife Service reached an agreement to create Sodalis Nature Park.
- An agreement was reached in January of 2010 to purchase 146 acres of land in Washington Township, near the center of Hendricks County. This property will be developed as the W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

## Park Amenities

### McCloud Nature Park

Located in northwest township of Eel River, McCloud Nature Park is the department's first park. At 232 acres, it is also the largest park in Hendricks County.

The park's varied terrain includes wetlands, open grasslands, the Big Walnut Creek, seeps and forested hills. The variety of natural communities present in the park offer opportunities to explore and compare different ecosystems.

Existing Amenities/Programs:

- Nature Center
- 6.5 miles of hiking trail network



- Big Walnut Creek access
- Native prairie and woodland communities
- Astronomy pads and viewing programs
- Wetland
- Trails and bridge

### **Sodalis Nature Park**

Sodalis Nature Park is the result of an innovative partnership agreement between Hendricks County Parks and Recreation, the Indianapolis Airport Authority and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The agreement permits HCPR to create a nature park on a portion of land that has been set aside for habitat preservation for the Indiana Bat.

When the park opens in 2011, it will include over 3 miles of natural walking trails, a universally accessible trail, five accessible picnic areas with accessible picnic benches, and a fully accessible fishing platform that extends into the 5.5 acre pond. A Rain Garden with native plantings will help to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality, while providing a natural area to attract birds and butterflies.

### **W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park**

Land for the W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park was acquired in January 2010. The land includes a working farm and an approximately 40 acre wooded area that sits in a drainage basin. Given the size and location of this property, the park has the potential to become another Hendricks County regional park. Its location is particularly important as it sits within Washington Township, a rapidly growing area of the county.

### **Vandalia Trail**

The Vandalia Trail is a rustic 3-mile multi-use trail for hiking, off-road bicycling, and horseback riding connecting the towns of Amo & Coatesville in southwest Hendricks County.

The Vandalia Trail follows the abandoned Vandalia rail corridor and is also part of the proposed National Heritage Road Trail, an Indiana cross-state trail that will extend 150 miles through 30 communities when completed.

In November 2008, INDOT awarded a grant of \$665,000 to HCPR for acquisition of property or easements to allow for future extension of the Vandalia Trail / National Road Heritage Trail across Hendricks County.

Although HCPR does not own the trail, the department established a partnership with the Indiana Trails Fund in 2007 and maintains the portion of trail connecting Amo and Coatesville.

### **Programming**

HCPR provides programs and activities aimed at a variety of ages, user groups and interests. New, revised and additional programs and recreational activities, respond to changing community needs and interests. To date, all public programs have been offered free of charge.



# Hendricks County Trail System

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A key consideration of this master plan was the review of existing and proposed Hendricks County pedestrian, bike, and equestrian trails.

There is widespread desire in the county for additional trail corridors. County residents and stakeholders also believe HCPR should take an active role in the county's trail system. They view the department as uniquely able to offer a county-wide perspective to trail development.

## Assessment of Current Trail System

In the past decade, various trail providers within the county have developed a patchwork of trail systems of varying sizes and complexity.

Hendricks County does not have a comprehensive trail master plan to provide direction for a feasible, comprehensive trail network for the entire county. Trail planning to date has been conducted on a more localized level with little interconnection between the county's trail systems.

As a county park system, HCPR is well placed to lead a county-wide perspective and planning effort for trail development, facilitate links between trail systems, and facilitate trail development and management in unincorporated areas. Given its county-wide jurisdiction, HCPR may also be the most suitable entity to actively develop and manage portions of trail systems located in unincorporated areas.

## Planning Considerations/Strategic Directions

Trail use and the value of a trail system typically grow as the length and number of trails increases, and additional trail connections are made. While connections between the various trail systems are currently non-existent, Hendricks County does have the makings of a county-wide trail system that would link many of the major population centers.

- The proposed B&O Trail offers an east/west artery in the northern half of the county will connect Brownsburg and North Salem. A connection with McCloud Nature Park could be added.
- The proposed Vandalia Trail provides a second east/west artery and will connect Plainfield, Clayton, Amo and Coatesville.
- Linking the Plainfield and Avon Trail systems to each other and to the B&O Trail will provide a north/south corridor and will connect three of the largest population centers in the county.

The following priorities for trail development focus on first developing existing/planned trails and then planning for future trails.

- Purchase additional trail right of way for the Vandalia Trail.
- Develop connections between the Avon, Plainfield and Brownsburg Trail Systems, and the B&O Trail.
- Fully develop the B&O and Vandalia Trails.
- Develop a county wide trail master plan with links to:
  - Connect all major population centers to a trail network
  - Provide a connection from McCloud Nature Park and Sodalis Nature Park to the trail system
  - Identify other major trail corridors.
  - Connect to mass transit amenities as they are developed within and adjacent to the county.





## Public Participation

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Nearly seventy-five community members participated in a series of stakeholder and public meetings held in July and August 2010. Participants represented diverse interests, entities and expertise including residents, recreation enthusiasts, businesses, county and local government, county and local park staff and partner organizations.

Five core themes emerged from the stakeholder and public meetings. These themes were widely agreed upon by participants and represent important considerations for HCPR in meeting the desires and needs of the county. In addition to the core themes, several specific Hendricks County recreation/amenity needs were identified by participants.

### Core Themes

#### **Theme: Nature-Based Recreation**

Desire for nature-based recreation focus by HCPR.

- Stakeholders see the need for larger-scale, nature-oriented recreation in the county
- They view HCPR as the best county entity to fill this need, in part because larger tracts of land are generally located in unincorporated areas.
- They appreciate the nature-oriented recreation available at McCloud and Soda-lis Nature Parks.

**Theme: Conservation of Open Space** The need to acquire additional park land, particularly land that supports nature-based recreation and/or county identity.

- Stakeholders recognize the county is rapidly growing.
- Overall, they give greater priority to acquiring land, if appropriate tracts are available, rather than developing new park amenities.
- They desire to preserve and protect the natural amenities, character and history of the county.

#### **Theme: Connectivity**

Desire for a county-wide trail system that connects towns, parks and existing/proposed trail systems, and the consensus that HCPR has a role to play in the trail system.

- Stakeholders see great benefit in providing a connected trail system within the county and beyond.
  - Benefits cited include:
    - Improve health
    - Spur economic development
    - Leverage county recreation amenities
    - Attract young professionals and families
    - Increase recreation opportunities
- Stakeholders look to HCPR to bring a "big picture" perspective by focusing on a county-wide trail system.
- Beyond that, stakeholders were fairly evenly divided between the role being:
  - A promoter and facilitator of trail development
  - A developer and owner of trails
  - A manager of trails once they are built



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**Theme: County Leadership**

The desire for HCPR to take a leadership role in coordinating and planning for county-wide recreation amenities, programs and trails.

- Stakeholders believe HCPR should lead efforts to coordinate county-wide recreation opportunities.
- There is not a call for HCPR to manage or direct other park systems, but rather to have a broad perspective of the county's recreation offerings, to compile this information and to make it available to the community and its visitors.

**Theme: Programming**

The current programming by HCPR is valued by stakeholders, and there is support to see this programming continue and expand.

**Hendricks County Recreation Needs**

During the stakeholder meetings, participants identified several specific recreation needs for the county.

- Connectivity (trails)
- Nature and Open Space Conservation
- Promoting Sense of Place by celebrating and preserving the history and character of the county.

To a lesser extent the following needs were cited:

- Camping
- A facility for large events such as a large shelter, or pavilion.
- Accessible amenities for those with disabilities.
- A community garden.



# Community Survey

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A community survey was used to assess the recreation needs and priorities of residents, and to gain understanding of their knowledge and attitude towards HCPR. Results from the survey, coupled with the themes identified in the public and stakeholder meetings, were key in identifying goals and strategic directions for the master plan.

## Survey Methodology

The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Hendricks County.

Two rounds of survey invitations were mailed from a random population of Hendricks County households. The first round of 4,000 invitations yielded 161 responses and the second round of 10,000 invitations yielded 211 responses for a total of 372 responses. HCPR also distributed a survey link and paper copies at public events.

The final response rate, demographic information and confidence interval is adequate at a 95% confidence level to allow generalizations about the entire Hendricks County population.

## Key Findings of Survey

- Hendricks County park facilities and/or programs are frequented by almost 80% of the respondents
- 27% of respondents reported having visited McCloud Nature Park within the past year and they reported high satisfaction levels for all amenities at the park.
- Respondents overwhelmingly indicated perceiving that a family aquatics/water park was most important to Hendricks County as a facility that a parks and recreation department may provide.
- Respondents indicated they felt that facilities and services that provide a broader public service, such as basic park amenities and education programs, should not have user fees.
- Respondents indicated that costs should be covered by user fees for specific-use facilities such as swimming pools and campgrounds.
- Respondents indicated that when additional funding is required to meet increasing demand for parks and recreation facilities and services, it be pursued by developing facilities that can generate revenue.
- Nature and connector trails were designated as being the most important facility/service that a parks and recreation department may provide to individuals responding to the survey.
- If respondents had additional funding to devote to parks and recreation, they indicated that after maintaining current facilities, 'trails' was the first category for investment of additional funding.
- Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they perceived that parks and recreation facilities and programs provide an enhanced quality of life



## Needs Analysis

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As part of the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the planning team conducted a benchmarking study and needs analysis. These two efforts offer information to use in conjunction with qualitative information, collected during public engagement and the system inventory, to complete an analysis of park and recreation needs in Hendricks County.

### Benchmark Comparison

The purpose of benchmarking is to assist the planning team in setting standards for HCPR's parks and recreation facilities and to measure where HCPR stands in comparison to other chosen agencies in regard to park acreage, services, budgets, staffing, cost recovery, and other attributes.

The following five counties were selected as benchmarks:

- Hamilton County, IN
- Lake County, IN
- Saint Joseph County, IN
- Iredell County, NC
- Darke County, OH

Key benchmarking data sought included:

- Population
- Park acreage
- Staffing levels
- Government fund appropriation
- Revenue
- Existence of local parks systems and acreage within system

### Key Findings

- Hendricks County, with a population of 140,000, has a lower population than the five benchmark counties (250,216 average).
- HCPR manages 581 acres of parkland, equivalent to 4.0 acres per 1,000 people. Lake (6,136 ac.), St. Joseph (1,836 ac.), and Hamilton (1,445 ac.) Counties all manage more parkland than Hendricks County (581 ac.), while Darke (400 ac.) and Iredell Counties (187 ac.) manage fewer.
- HCPR has the least number of full- and part-time employees (3 and 6, respectively) per 1,000 residents. Lake County and Darke Counties report the highest numbers of staff among the benchmark counties.
- Expenditures per person for parks and recreation in Hendricks County was \$4.12, which is lower than all benchmark counties. Overall, the average dollar amount spent per person was \$10.69. Hendricks County receives 1.75% of the county budget which is also the lowest reporting agency compared to the benchmark agencies.
- St. Joseph, Lake, and Hamilton Counties reported some level of revenue. Hamilton County receives the lowest amount of revenue at \$181,500. Hendricks County ranks below all of the benchmarks in terms of revenue from fees and charges with \$15,800.
- A range of 2 to 14 local parks departments exist within the service area of benchmark counties. Hendricks County has 7 local parks and recreation departments within the county, near the middle of the benchmark range.



## Action Plan



The final step of the IDNR master planning process is the development of an Action Plan. This plan serves as a synthesis of the information gathered throughout the planning process, an ordering of needs, desires and priorities for the recreation system, and concrete action items for the park system over a five-year horizon.

The action plan has been organized into six themes that relate not only to the mission of the parks and recreation department, but also connect to broader county goals. Through this action plan, Hendricks County Parks and Recreation will work to manage and protect county assets, teach and connect through programming, provide inclusive recreation, connect people and places, reach and involve the community, and enhance organizational capacity.

<b>MANAGE AND PROTECT ASSETS</b>
<b>Goals</b>
<b>HCPR will:</b>
Provide recreation amenities to meet the needs of Hendricks County residents
Model sustainable environmental practices
Promote the wise stewardship of natural resources
<b>Strategies</b>
Provide ecologically-oriented and environmentally sustainable recreation amenities
Actively pursue the acquisition of additional parklands
Provide recreation amenities that complement those offered by other county parks departments
Seek opportunities for partnerships and collaborations to provide recreation amenities
<b>Action Items</b>
<b>McCloud Nature Park</b>
Reforest park entrance
Reconstruct wetlands located on south end
Add arboretum plantings
Install creek access improvements to canoe launch
Construct bridges and associated boardwalks on south end
Construct pavilions to meet facility demand on north side of park
Develop plan for public art installations
Construct low-flow crossing at Big Walnut Creek
Design and construct new entrance
<b>Sodalis Nature Park</b>
Complete phase one improvements as outlined in site master plan
Coordinate phase two parking development with Planning Department (based upon need)
Develop phase two parking (if need dictates)
Seek location for the development of an environmental education center
Plan and develop environmental education center (if location is acquired)
Pursue development of additional IAA protected land as publicly accessible park land
<b>W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park</b>
Complete site master plan



<b>TEACH AND CONNECT THROUGH PROGRAMMING</b>
<b>Goals</b>
<b>HCPR will:</b>
Promote the health and well-being of county residents
Provide programming opportunities to benefit the Hendricks County community
Attract visitors from outside Hendricks County
Promote the environmental health of Hendricks County
<b>Strategies</b>
Partner with Health Community to promote healthy lifestyles
Seek shared development of community programs with local parks agencies
Teach environmental sustainability and conservation concepts and practices through programs
Use sustainable park maintenance practices as program opportunities
<b>Action Items</b>
Identify and implement new programs to encourage healthy lifestyles
Identify and implement new conservation and environmental sustainability programs
Annually evaluate program roster and identify/implement program changes and additions

<b>ENHANCE INCLUSIVE RECREATION</b>
<b>Goals</b>
<b>HCPR will:</b>
Offer recreation amenities and programs that are accessible to all regardless of age, race, ability or income
<b>Strategies</b>
Provide basic services and programs that are free of charge
Modify existing amenities, where feasible, to meet ADA standards
Incorporate ADA accessibility standards when adding new amenities
<b>Action Items</b>
<b>System-wide</b>
Adopt ADA procedures
Communicate accessible amenities and procedures on web page and in newsletters
Identify accessible trails on way-finding signage and park maps
<b>McCloud Nature Park</b>
Provide accessible parking to meet ADA standards
Install an ADA accessible route linking accessible parking, the nature center and the shelter
Replace concrete floor under existing pavilion
Add number and diversity of multi-sensory interactive exhibits



<b>CONNECT PEOPLE AND PLACES</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
	Lead the creation of physically interconnected county recreation system
<b>Strategies</b>	
	Work with the Planning Department to pursue the development of a county-wide trail system
	Advocate for trails linking major county population centers
	Assist with the development of regional trails
<b>Action Items</b>	
	Continue right-of-way acquisition and development of the Vandalia Trail
	Collaborate with towns to develop modern, accessible trailheads on the Vandalia Trail

<b>REACH AND INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
	Connect county residents to recreation opportunities and amenities
	Serve as a county-wide recreation liaison
	Communicate effectively with the public, county visitors, policy makers, partners, volunteers and employees
<b>Strategies</b>	
	Regularly meet and collaborate with federal, state, county, regional, and non-government agencies regarding efforts that affect the delivery of park and recreation services within the county.
	Collaborate with the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County, plus other public and private organizations, to increase awareness, advocacy, development, and support of HCPR.
<b>Action Items</b>	
	Develop annual reports and distribute to partners and public
	Create and distribute via website comprehensive directory of park resources in Hendricks County



<b>ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
Use an administrative model that ensures that HCPR's financial and capital resources are sustainable over the long-term.	
Exemplify best practices in human resource management, budgeting, and communications.	
Ensure management plans, strategies, and analyses are sound, collaborative, and useful.	
Adopt policies and management practices that lead by example in areas of conservation and environmental management.	
<b>Strategies</b>	
Work with the County Council to investigate the establishment of an operational and capital development non-reverting account.	
Support the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County in their efforts to establish and cultivate an annual donation program, donor events, major gift opportunities, and endowments.	
Identify and develop policies for resource allocation and cost recovery that reflect the values of the community and the responsibility the county has to provide services.	
Support the orientation and education of park board members	
<b>Action Items</b>	
Develop land acquisition strategy	
Prepare a staffing gap analysis to identify personnel needs to accommodate needs of the community.	
Conduct an analysis of equipment and asset distribution throughout the HCPR service area, and identify central and satellite storage locations.	
Develop a long-term maintenance and equipment replacement schedule; incorporate into long-term budget.	
Conduct an analysis of pricing and fees regarding facilities and services that align with community values and reflect the responsibility of the county government.	
Conduct an analysis to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of impact fees.	
Establish a naming rights policy.	
Create a well-rounded volunteer program to support all major departmental functions.	
Develop an innovative comprehensive marketing plan and public/media relations plan and evaluate bi-annually.	
Develop a Memorandum of Agreement with the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County	
Initiate a feasibility study for providing public camping facilities	





## Land Acquisition Priorities

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Given the projected growth of Hendricks County and its current shortfall in meeting state standards for available recreation land the acquisition of land for recreation amenities has been identified by residents and stakeholders as a county priority.

While HCPR should consider any viable opportunity to acquire land, the following criteria have been established for prioritizing potential opportunities.

### **Land Contiguous to Existing HCPR Parkland**

Land abutting the existing HCPR parks, McCloud Nature Park, Sodalis Nature Park, and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, would provide opportunities to expand the benefits/recreation opportunities of these parks, while providing efficient use of HCPR resources.

### **Land in High Growth Areas of Hendricks County**

Opportunities for parkland, particularly large tracts of land suitable for nature-oriented recreation, will become scarcer in high-growth parts of the County as development continues. There is a need to add park land in these areas before the land is simply not available.

### **Land in Underserved Areas of Hendricks County**

Several areas of the county were identified as underserved: Brownsburg, particularly to the north; Pittsboro, and the I-70/State Road 39 Interchange, which has the potential for significant future development. These areas of the county also are currently experiencing high growth, or have the potential for significant growth in the future.

**Land Acquired/Used Through Partnerships or Innovative Funding** Limited funding calls for creative measures to acquire land. HCPR has already used partnerships and innovative funding arrangements. These arrangements have permitted the department to leverage available resources to acquire much-needed recreation land.

### **Land Along Blueway and Greenway Corridors**

Natural corridors serve important functions in native communities by encouraging the movement of wildlife between ecosystems. They also provide opportunities for trail corridors.

### **Land Contiguous to Existing or Proposed Trails**

Acquiring land along existing or proposed trails provides opportunities for destinations along the trail route, as well as trailheads and access points to the trail itself.

### **Land with Existing Natural Communities or Historic/Cultural Character**

Park land with existing natural, historic or cultural features provides opportunities to preserve the character of Hendricks County and offers opportunities for related recreation, programming and interpretive learning.



## Economic Impact

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Parks and trail amenities have been shown to increase quality of life, contribute to economic development, increase tax revenues, stimulate tourism, improve health and well-being, and contribute to a healthier environment.

As a part of the master planning process, the planning team evaluated the economic benefits the Hendricks County Park and Recreation System brings to the county through its existing and proposed amenities.

### **Economic Development**

Parks and trails contribute to a higher quality of life and can be a deciding factor in where businesses and residents locate. As well, they may bring revenue to local businesses through recreation associated purchases. Thus parks and trails can both spur new development in communities and help to support existing businesses.

In Hendricks County, the proposed Vandalia and B&O Trails, and the creation of a county-wide trail system have the potential to provide significant economic benefit to local communities, as such trails have been shown to attract residential and business development.

The county may also see additional revenues and development associated with the opening of Sodalís Nature Park. Located on property set aside as bat habitat, the opening of the park brings new use to land that was previously not available to the public.

### **Property Values**

Studies have found that homeowners are willing to pay a premium to live in close proximity to protected open space. Homes as far as one mile away from protected open space have been shown to capture a measurable increase in their value as a result of this proximity.

With its location in the fast-growing Washington Township, the development of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park could have a significant impact on the value of future and existing residential development in that park's vicinity. As the county's trail system develops property values among the trail corridors could also increase.

### **Tourism**

Parks and trails can increase tourism by offering opportunities that attract visitors to the county or encourage them to stay longer.

McCloud Nature Park regularly sees visitors from Putnam and Boone County as well as Indianapolis and Hamilton County, indicating that the park system already has a draw outside the county. Sodalís Nature Park is poised to increase outside visitation. As well, the proposed Vandalia and B&O trails have the potential to attract large numbers of visitors as they are expanded.

### **Tax Revenue**

Park systems indirectly contribute to the tax revenue stream. When recreation amenities lead to increased property values, economic and residential development, and additional dollars spent in the county, tax revenues for property taxes, innkeepers tax and sales tax also increase.





## Plan Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this Comprehensive Master Plan is to create a clear set of goals, policies, standards, and objectives that will provide direction to the Hendricks County Park Board for the development of recreational facilities in the near and distant future.

The improvements and programs recommended in this plan are the result of a thorough assessment of the current HCPR facilities and programs; input from the community at large, as well as special interest groups community leaders, the Hendricks County Park Board and the Master Plan Steering Committee; reviewing other community planning studies and documents; and evaluating both the challenges to be met and opportunities available. These recommendations are meant to guide the development of recreation resources and amenities for the next five years, and prioritize improvements to park and recreation programs and amenities that would most benefit the community.

As the county has experienced rapid growth, which is projected to continue, this document also considers how that growth will impact the planning area beyond the typical five-year planning window.

### Specifically, this Master Plan Update will:

- Set achievable goals and objectives that reflect current and future issues, challenges and opportunities as they relate to the park system.
- Evaluate the progress made on goals and action items outlined in the HCPR 2006 - 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan.
- Incorporate current policies, objectives and constraints.
- Incorporate feedback from the Hendricks County Park Board, Master Plan Steering Committee, stakeholders, Hendricks County residents and Hendricks County Parks and Recreation users.
- Elicit the input and support of Hendricks County residents.
- Evaluate the physical condition of existing parks and amenities.
- Evaluate existing parks and recreation programming.
- Review the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization Regional Pedestrian Plan and provide a guide for HCPR involvement in trail management and/or development.
- Provide a guide for the development of park and recreation amenities that reflect the interests and needs of the community.
- Provide information and documentation to support future policy decisions by the Hendricks County Park Board.
- Serve as a supporting document to secure funding for proposed projects.
- Provide the basis to make accurate budget decisions.
- Serve as a communication document for county planning authorities, other county park and recreation departments, and county recreation groups.



# HCPR Mission and Goals

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## MISSION STATEMENT

**To lead in the protection of outstanding natural, historic and recreation areas, and linkages.  
To practice and promote the highest conservation ethics and  
provide environmental education and recreation opportunities  
to the community.  
To lead in enhancing quality of life and individual health  
while driving economic development  
to ensure a sustainable future for our community.**

## GOALS

### **Hendricks County Park and Recreation will strive to:**

Provide recreation amenities to meet the needs of Hendricks County residents

Promote the environmental health of Hendricks County

Model sustainable environmental practices

Promote the wise stewardship of natural resources

Adopt policies and management practices that lead by example in areas of conservation and environmental management

Provide programming opportunities to benefit the Hendricks County community

Promote the health and well-being of county residents

Offer recreation amenities and programs that are accessible to all regardless of age, race, ability or income

Lead the creation of physically interconnected county recreation system

Connect county residents to recreation opportunities and amenities

Serve as a county-wide recreation liaison

Communicate effectively with the public, county visitors, policy makers, partners, volunteers and employees

Attract visitors from outside Hendricks County

Use an administrative model that ensures that HCPR's financial and capital resources are sustainable over the long-term

Exemplify best practices in human resource management, budgeting, and communications

Ensure management plans, strategies, and analyses are sound, collaborative, and useful



**Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context - a chair in a room,  
a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan.  
- Eero Saarinen**



# Hendricks County Character and Culture

## Location and Planning Area

Hendricks County is located on the western border of Indianapolis. The county covers an area of approximately 408 square miles and is distinctly suburban along the eastern border and rural in the central and western sections of the county.

As the second-fastest growing county in Indiana, Hendricks County has experienced substantial growth over the past 20 years. During that time, the population has nearly doubled, from 75,717 in 1990 to a 2010 population of 145,500.

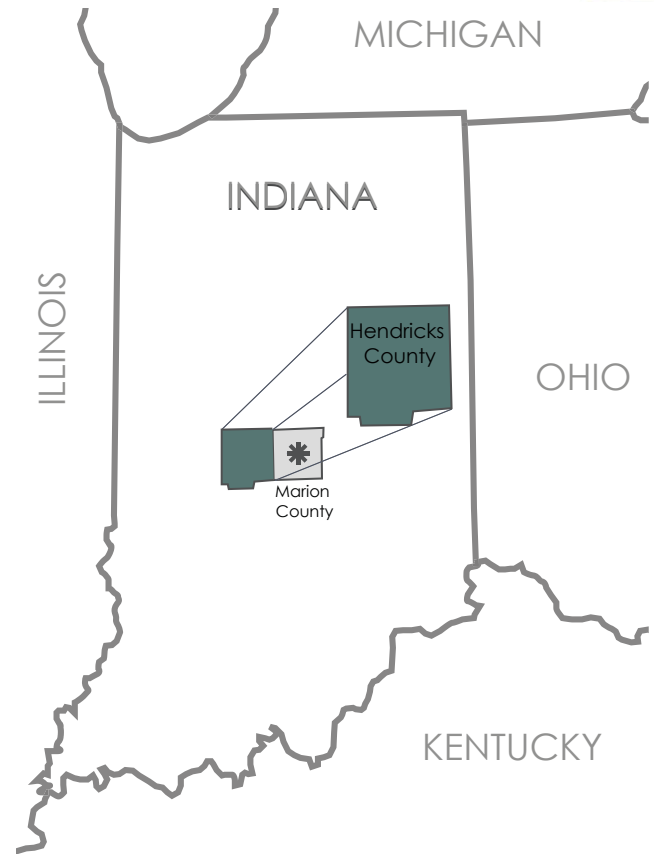
Eleven incorporated towns exist within the county, five of which provide recreational resources to their local population with varying levels of service. These include:

<b>FIGURE A. Incorporated Towns</b>		
<b>Town</b>	<b>Population (2000 Census)</b>	<b>Population (2010 Census)</b>
Amo	414	401
*Avon	6,248	12,446
*Brownsburg	14,520	21,285
Clayton	693	972
Coatesville	516	523
*Danville	6,418	9,001
Lizton	327	488
North Salem	591	518
*Pittsboro	1,588	2,928
*Plainfield	18,396	27,631
Stilesville	261	316

\*Indicates the community operates a parks and recreation department. In addition, two townships have park operations: Washington Township and Guilford Township.

The county's transportation network includes several significant road corridors including:

- Interstate 70 in the county's SW corner
- Interstate 65 just touching the NW corner
- Interstate 74 running along the northeast
- US 40 (Historical National Road), paralleling I-70
- US 36 running east/west and bisecting the county
- US 136, paralleling I-74
- State Road 39, running north/south
- State Road 267, running north/south
- State Road 75, running north/south along the county's western edge



**FIGURE B. Hendricks County Location Map**

- State Road 236, running from the NW corner of the county to Danville
- Ronald Reagan Parkway, connecting I-70 to I-74

Much of the county's growth has occurred along these transportation corridors, particularly in the eastern portion of the county. A new interchange at I-70 and SR 39 is widely expected to bring economic development to that area of the county. It was noted by community stakeholders that amenities, including recreation amenities, would help to attract development once this interchange is complete.

The county's proximity to Indianapolis/Marion County offers residents a significant number of nearby recreation opportunities. Eagle Creek Park, in particular, abuts the northeast edge of the county, and was frequently mentioned as a recreation destination by county residents. Other popular Marion County attractions mentioned by Hendricks County residents include the Indianapolis Canal, the Monon Trail, and the Cultural Trail. Trail connections to Marion County would provide alternative transportation links to Marion County, its extended trail system, and its recreation amenities.



## Education System

Six public school districts operate within the county, as well as several private schools.

### Avon

- Avon High School
- Avon Middle School North
- Avon Middle School South
- Avon Intermediate School East
- Avon Intermediate School West
- Hickory Elementary School
- Maple Elementary School
- Pine Tree Elementary School
- Sycamore Elementary School
- White Oak Elementary School
- River Birch Elementary School
- Cedar Elementary School
- Kingsway Christian School

### Brownsburg

- Brownsburg High School
- Brownsburg Middle School East
- Brownsburg Middle School West
- Brown Elementary School
- White Lick Elementary School
- Cardinal Elementary School
- Eagle Elementary School
- Reagan Elementary School
- Delaware Trail Elementary School
- Cooperative Achievement Program
- Bethesda Christian Schools
- St. Malachy Elementary School

### Mill Creek

- Cascade Senior High School
- Cascade Junior High School
- Mill Creek East Elementary School
- Mill Creek West Elementary School

### Danville

- Danville Community High School
- Danville Middle School
- North Elementary School
- South Elementary School

### Northwest

- Tri-West Senior High School
- Tri-West Middle School
- North Salem Elementary School
- Pittsboro Elementary School
- Pittsboro Primary School

### Plainfield

- Plainfield High School
- Plainfield Community Middle School

- Brentwood Elementary School
- Central Elementary School
- Van Buren Elementary School
- Clarks Creek Elementary School
- Plainfield Christian School
- St. Susanna Christian School

Each school has a comprehensive list of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities which vary by school, but include: athletics, clubs, arts and performance, and recreation facilities. Partnerships between the schools and the county's various parks and recreation programs provide opportunities for shared resources. For example, Plainfield Parks & Recreation has a shared facility use agreement between the parks department and Plainfield Community Schools for swim education and team practice.

### Planning Considerations/Strategic Directions

As school budgets have tightened, HCPR plays an increasingly important role in offering educational programming and/or inexpensive field trip opportunities to area schools. The department's school outreach program has grown from 1,000 students when it was established in 2007 to 2,080 students in 2009. Education programs are held both at auxiliary sites, such as local libraries, as well as at McCloud Nature Park.

With its natural setting, trails, and educational programs, McCloud Nature Park is a popular destination for field trips. However, field trips of larger groups can be problematic in inclement weather, as the Nature Center cannot accommodate groups larger than 50 adults or 75 children. It is anticipated that Sodalis Nature Park will also be a popular education resource, following its opening in Spring 2011. When the park opens, all amenities will be outdoors which will somewhat curtail field trips and education programs during inclement weather or the winter season.

Given its current staffing levels, the parks department is not able to accommodate all requests for educational programs. In 2010, the department turned away approximately 20 school groups and additional scout troops due to limited staffing. Should program requests continue to increase as they have in the past, the need/desire for educational programming will further outpace the department's ability to accommodate demand.



## Historical and Cultural Features

There are a number of historical places of interest in Hendricks County, including 18 places listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and an additional five recognized by the Indiana Historical Bureau.

### Those on National Register of Historic Places:

Ora Adams House  
301-303 E. Main Street, Danville

Amo THI&E Interurban Depot  
4985 Railroad Street, Amo

Leander Campbell House  
498 E. Broadway, Danville

Danville Main Street Historic District  
Bounded by: East, Main, Cross and Marion Streets

Danville Courthouse Square Historic District  
Bounded by: Clinton, Tennessee, Broadway and Cross Streets

Dr. Jeremiah & Ann Jane DePew House  
292 E. Broadway, Danville

Hendricks County Bridge Number 316  
Center Road, Friendship Gardens Park, Plainfield

Hendricks County Jail & Sheriff's Residence- Hendricks County Historical Museum  
170 S. Washington Street, Danville

Joel Jessop Farm  
CR 800 near CR 1050 E, Friendswood Vicinity

Noah & Hannah Hadley Kellum House  
7290 S. CR 1050 E, Camby Vicinity

Jessop-Chandler-Kellum Farm  
6726 S. White Lick Road, Plainfield

John W. McClain House  
1445 S. CR 525 E, Avon Vicinity

Bowman-McCormack House  
CR 200 W, 0.5 south of junction of U.S. 40, Clayton

Smith Farm  
2698 S. CR 900 E, Plainfield Vicinity

Sugar Grove Meeting House & Cemetery  
Junction of CR 700 E & CR 600 S, Plainfield Vicinity

THI & E Interurban Depot  
401 S. Vine Street, Plainfield

Twin Bridges  
CR 150 East over White Lick Creek, Danville Vicinity

Wilson-Courtney House  
10 Cartersburg Road, Danville

### Those Recognized by Indiana Historical Bureau with Historical Markers:

Plainfield Western Yearly Meetinghouse

- Site of annual meeting of Religious Society of Friends since 1858
- Depository to house Quaker records erected at site in 1873
- Friends Central Academy served as secondary school 1881-1919

Danville Carnegie Library

- In May 1902, the Library Board authorized lot purchase and tax levy to support public library as required by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie
- Built 1902-03
- Dedicated 1903 with 1,000 volumes

Central Normal College

- Central Normal College moved from Ladoga, Indiana to Danville in 1878, to the old Danville Academy Building
- The college was in operation until 1951.
- Later, the college facilities were the home of Danville High School and then Danville Middle School
- Currently Danville's Town Hall is located in one of the former college buildings

Samuel Luther Thompson Marker – Danville, Ellis Park

- Baseball player, born in Danville
- Educated at Danville Graded School
- Played for Philadelphia Phillies 1888-1898 and the Detroit Tigers in 1906

Arthur L. Trester – marker site: Amo

- Born in Pecksburg, IN
- Elected to Indiana High School Athletic Association in 1911 and went on to a storied career with the IHSAA
- Coined the recognizable phrase of "Hoosier Hysteria" for Indiana High School basketball.



## **Other Historical Sites & Points of Interest in Hendricks County:**

1883 One Room School – Living History Program, Pittsboro

- This building was moved from the Frank McClung farm 4 miles away to the grounds of the Pittsboro Elementary school
- Building was restored, and now serves as a living history program

Historic National Road - US 40

- The National Road was one of the first major improved highways in the United States to be built by the federal government
- Construction began in 1811 at Cumberland, Maryland
- The highway continues west from this point passing through Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana
- Construction of the highway concluded in Vandalia, Illinois in 1839

Site of Van Buren Elm at the Plainfield Western Yearly Meetinghouse, Plainfield, Main Street (US 40)

- President VanBuren toppled from his stage-coach in front of this building as a practical joke in response to his veto of a bill to fund national road improvements
- The roots of the tree which caused President Van Buren to topple were named the Van Buren Elm to commemorate the event
- A nearby elementary school is named Van Buren Elementary.

## **Hospitals and Health/Family Services**

Hendricks Regional Health- main campus: Danville–satellites in Brownsburg, Plainfield, Avon, and Lizton

IU Health West - east side of county

St. Francis – satellite facility in Plainfield

Children's Bureau/Community Partners, Danville

- Provides free and voluntary home-based case management CCDF

Day Nursery Early Care and Education Center, Avon

- Provides NAEYC Accredited Child Care, financial assistance to those in need

Healthy Families Hendricks County, Danville

- No-cost support program for pregnant women and families with new babies

Dept of Family Resources, Plainfield

- Provides direct social services to families affected by child abuse and/or neglect

Hendricks County Head Start, Danville

- Income-based comprehensive development pre-school for ages 3-5

Hendricks County Health Department, Danville

- Provides immunization to all ages for nominal fee

Sycamore Services Inc. Children's Services, Danville

- Developmental and occupational services to children with disabilities and special needs.

Alzheimer's Support Group Hendricks Regional Health, Danville

Hendricks County Senior Services, Danville

- Provides services that older adults need to remain in their own home.

Meals on Wheels, Hendricks Regional Health, Danville

- Home delivered meals, prescribed by a doctor, to homebound seniors

Sheltering Wings, Danville

- Shelter for battered women

Hendricks County Mental Health Association, Avon

## **Libraries**

- Avon-Washington Library
- Brownsburg Public Library
- Danville Public Library
- Coatesville Public Library
- Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library
- Clayton Liberty Public Library

## **Arts & Entertainment**

### **Museums**

- Hendricks County Museum – Danville
- Children's Museum of Indianapolis
- Indianapolis Museum of Art
- Eiteljorg Museum- Indianapolis

### **Festivals and Special Events**

Fairs and special events are located throughout the year at various county locations. Some are free of charge. These events include:

Easter Egg Hunt

Arbuckle Acres Park, Brownsburg





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Brownsburg Annual Pops Festival  
Brownsburg High School Gymnasium

AHS Delta Epsilon Phi Jazz Fest  
Hummel Park, Plainfield

Central Indiana Artist Spring Art Show  
Avon Town Hall

Springfest Crafts Festival Plus  
Hummel Park, Plainfield

Hendricks Co. Antique Tractor Show  
Hendricks Co. Fairgrounds

Amo Fish Fry  
Amo

Fourth of July Fireworks and Parade  
Arbuckle Acres Park, Brownsburg

Fourth of July Celebration  
Hummel Park, Plainfield

Fourth of July Celebration and Fireworks  
Ellis Park, Danville

Fourth of July Fireworks and Fun Fest  
Pittsboro Park- Pittsboro

Symphony in the Park  
Ellis Park Amphitheater

Summer National Drags,  
Lucas Oil Raceway Park, Brownsburg

Arts in the Park  
Arbuckle Acres Park, Brownsburg

Hendricks County 4-H Fair  
Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds and Conference  
Complex, Danville

North Salem Old Fashioned Days  
North Salem

Fair on the Square  
Danville Courthouse Square

Plainfield Heritage Quaker Day  
Plainfield Friends Church

Avon Community Heritage Festival  
Washington Township Community Park, Avon

Heartland Apple Festival  
Beasley's Orchard, Danville

Winterland Light Show  
Ellis Park, Danville

Christmas Under the Stars  
Arbuckle Acres Park and Main Street, Brownsburg

## Local Environment



*Prairie, McCloud Nature Park*

Hendricks County is located within the Indiana physiographic region known as the Tipton Till Plain. This flat topographic area was created from debris deposited by retreating glaciers of the Wisconsin Age which covered the region some 15,000 years ago.

There are no bodies of water in Hendricks County of appreciable size. The largest is approximately two-dozen acres. There are a number of small streams within the county, and two significant stream corridors: Big Walnut Creek, which runs through McCloud Nature Park, and White Lick Creek and its associated forks, located in the eastern portion of the county. The creeks provide limited water-based recreation opportunities, due to fluctuating water levels throughout the year. The streams are often too shallow for boating or canoeing, although 'creek stomping' at McCloud Nature Park is a popular activity.

The Central Indiana Land Trust (CILTI) has identified a number of areas within the county as valuable to preserve to maintain habitat for sensitive wildlife. These include the riparian corridors of the White Lick Creek and the Big Walnut Creek. According to CILTI "Most of the remaining forest in Hendricks County is found along a stem of White Lick Creek....A White Lick Creek greenway system could protect important wildlife habitat while offering outdoor recreation as well as help maintain or improve a high quality stream."

### Climate

Hendricks County has a continental climate characterized by winter temperatures cold enough to support snow cover, with warm temperatures typical of tropical climates in the summer. The county is subject to the various conditions of all four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter) and enjoys a mild climate overall. Winter is the most unpredictable season, as

precipitation takes on all forms (rain, sleet, freezing rain, snow, and hail).

- Average rainfall per year is 40.3 inches.
- Average snowfall per year is 19.6 inches.
- Average July temperature is 84.7 degrees high/65 degrees low (Fahrenheit)
- Average January temperature is 34 degrees high/18 degrees low (Fahrenheit)
- Lowest recorded temperature -27 degrees Fahrenheit in 1994
- Maximum average precipitation month is July (4.42 inches)

Warmest average temperature month is July  
Coldest average temperature month is January  
(Source: 2009 NOAS – [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov))

Overall, the climatic patterns support a wide range of recreation activities, although winter snow falls are light and creation of outdoor ice without the use of refrigeration is difficult. Outdoor activities that rely on snow cover, such as sledding or cross country skiing, are generally available on a limited basis.



*Big Walnut Creek, McCloud Nature Park*

### Soils

The soils in the county fall into seven major associations, the majority of which are poorly drained. The Crosby-Brookston soils comprise the majority of soils in the county, with the Miami-Crosby soils being the next most common. These soil types have some limitations on construction due to their wetness and potential for erosion. These soils are typically poorly drained and have severe to moderate limitations for recreational uses, including campgrounds, picnic areas, play areas, and paths and trails. These limitations are based on the soils' restrictive features such as flooding, wetness, and slope. These limitations may be overcome through appropriate site design, intensive maintenance, limited use of the site, or a combination of measures.

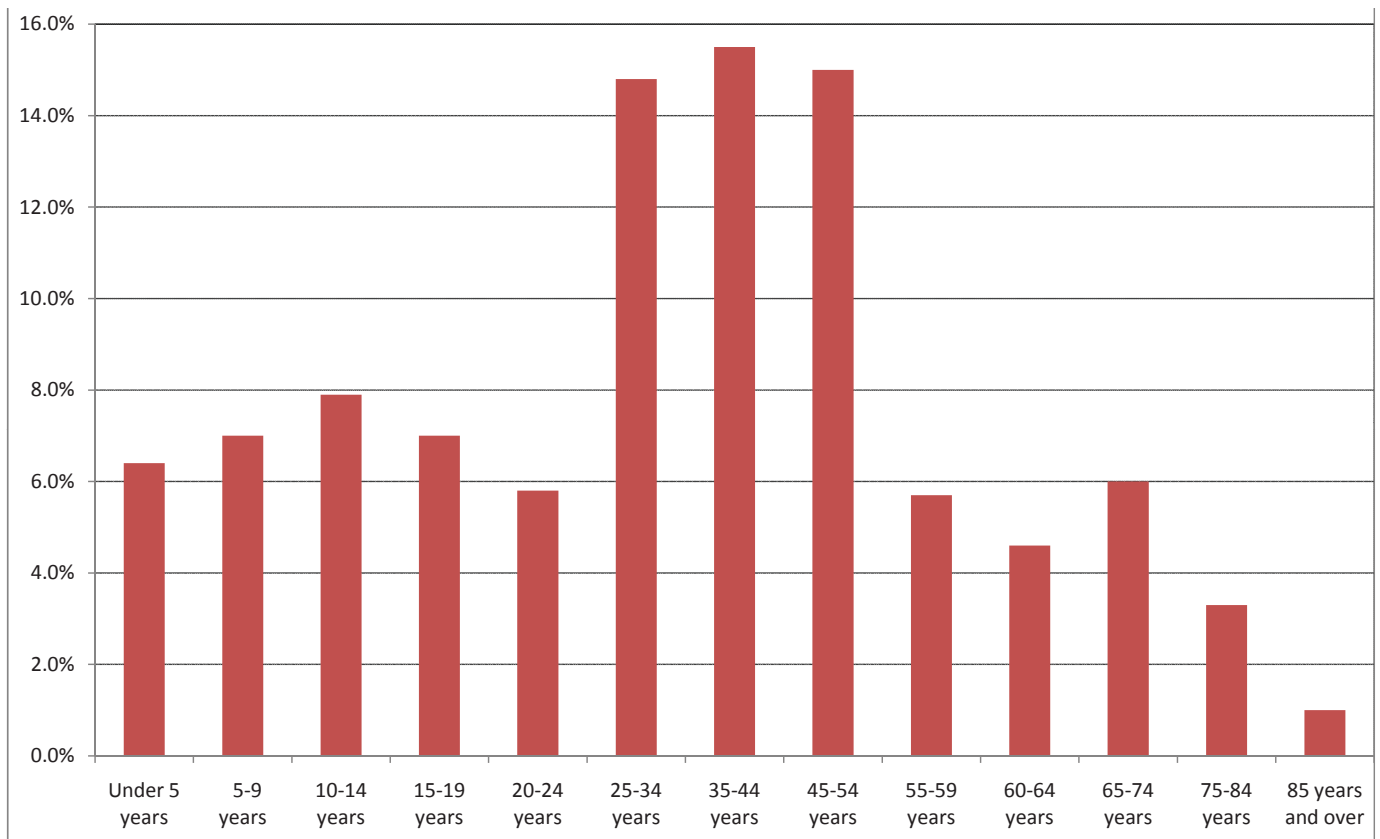
## Social/Economic Characteristics



With a 2010 Census\* population of 145,448 people, Hendricks County ranks as the 10th largest county in the state of Indiana (by population) and represents 2.24% of the state's total population. Since 2,000 the county's population has increased by 40%, making it the second fastest growing county in the state. Future projections indicate that the population will continue to increase at a pace that is greater than the state average.

In the report *Indiana Population Projections 2010 - 2040*, the Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC) provided projected Indiana population growth for the state and its counties through the year 2040. According to those projections, Hendricks County population will increase to nearly two hundred thousand people by 2040.

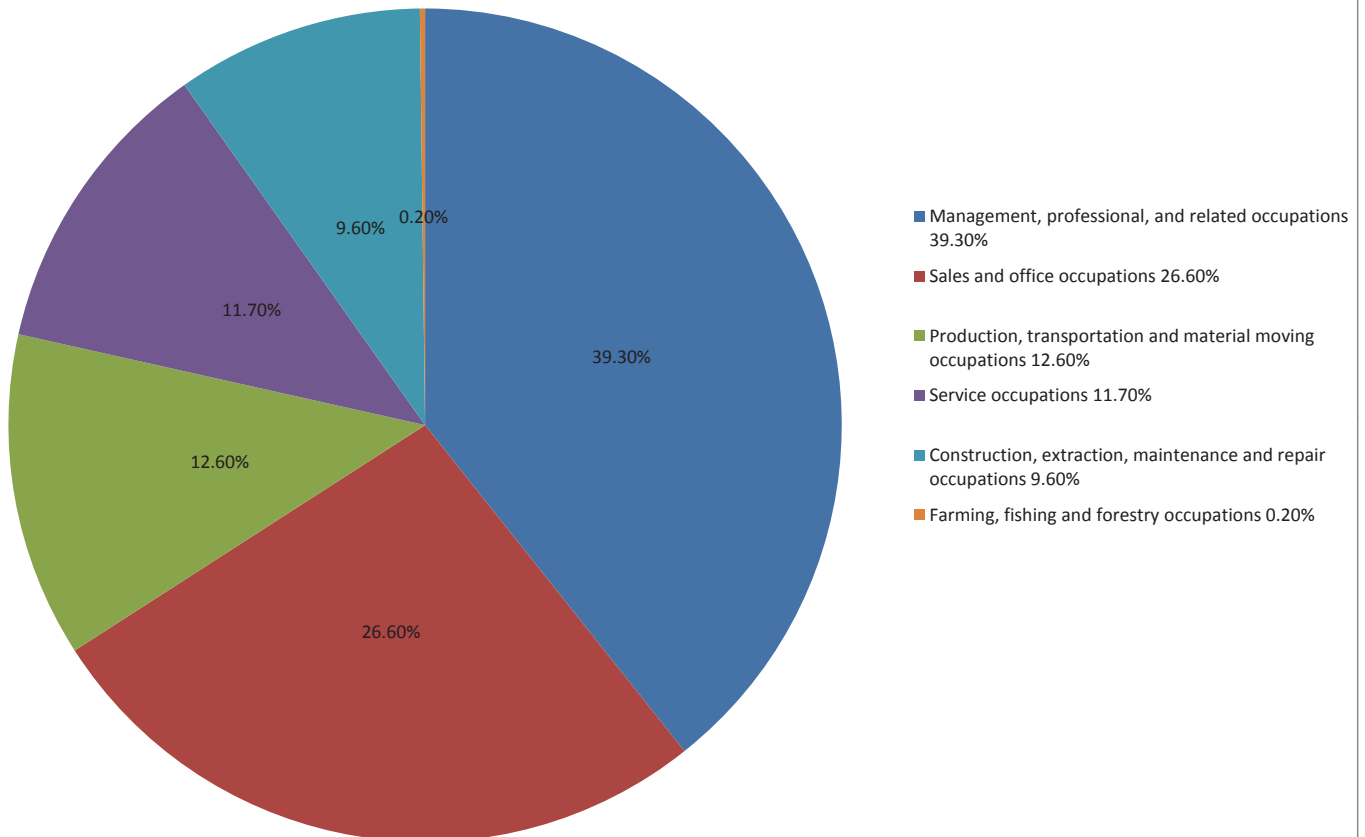
The IBRC report also noted that the county has a predominantly adult population, with a median age of 35.7 years. Just under 72% of the population is aged 20 years or older. The senior citizen (65 years or older) population accounts for slightly more than 10% of the total population, which is less than the state percentage of 12.8%. However, according to the IBRC, the median age for Hendricks County is projected to increase to between 40-years and 46-years by 2035.



**FIGURE C. Hendricks County Percentage of Population by Age (Projected Statistics from U.S. Census Bureau)**

According to the 2010 Census, the population of Hendricks County is predominantly Caucasian (90.1%), with the African-American, Native American, Asian, Latino, and Pacific Islander populations accounting for less than 8% of the total population. This is somewhat less diverse than the state as a whole, which also has a primarily Caucasian population of 85.7%. Between the years 2000 and 2010, the black population in the county grew 511 percent, from 1,143 to 6,988, making this population the largest minority group in the county.

\* Limited 2010 Census data was available at the time of printing. When available 2010 Census data was used. If not available, the most recent data available was used as noted.



**FIGURE D. Hendricks County Labor Force by Occupation (Projected Statistics by U.S. Census Bureau)**

More than three-quarters (78%) of Hendricks County residents live in family households, and just over 41% live with children under the age of 18. In the state of Indiana, only 31% of residents live with children under the age of 18. Nearly 10% of households with children are led by single parents.

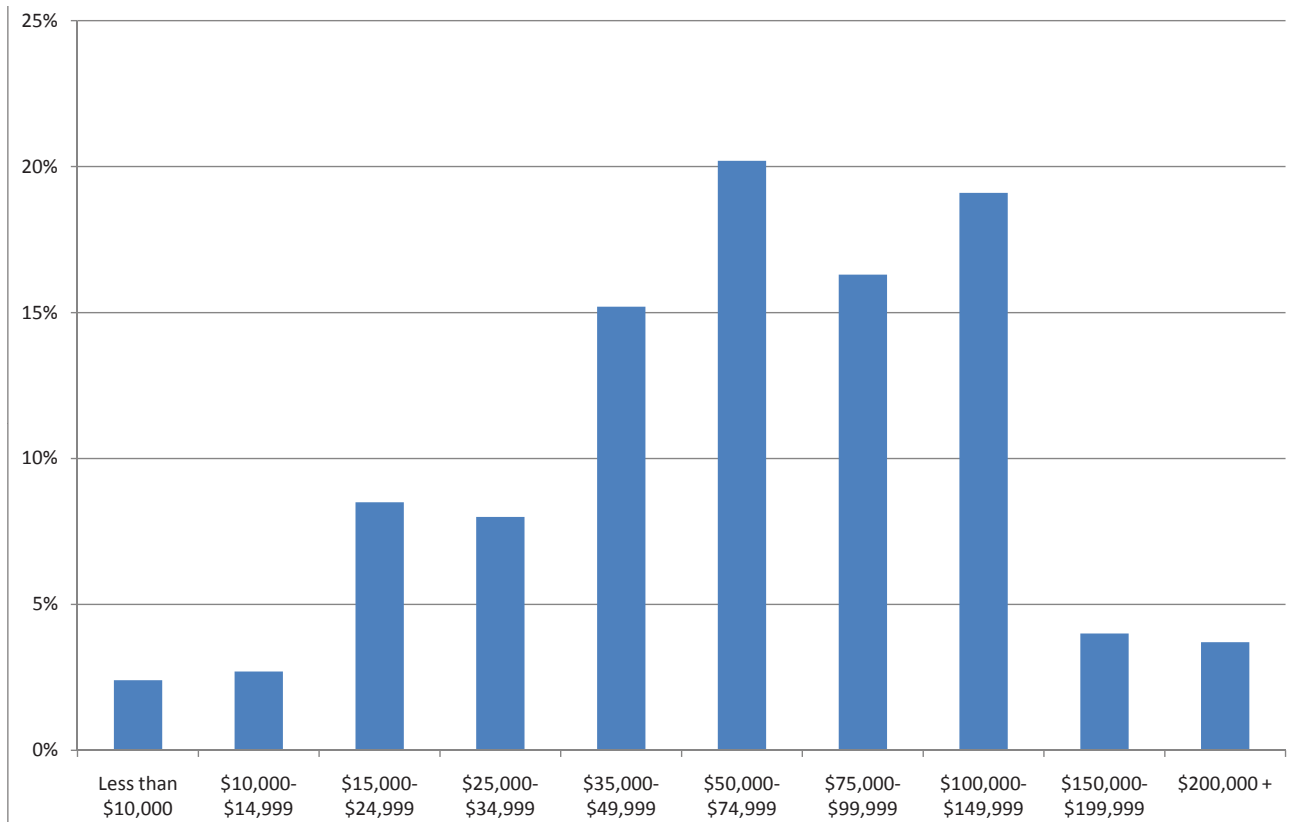
### Economy

Since the county was originally settled in 1820, agriculture has played an important role in its economic development. While agriculture is still prevalent in the county, particularly in the less densely populated western portion, other types of business and industry play an increasingly important role in the economic health of the community, and contribute to its comparatively low unemployment rate.

Major employers in the county include:

- Hendricks Regional Health, Danville
- Oreilly Automotive Distribution Center Inc., Brownsburg
- IU Health West, Avon
- Home Goods Distribution Center, Brownsburg
- Plainfield Correctional Facility, Plainfield
- Ray's Trash Service, Clayton
- Ryder, Plainfield
- Walmart Super Center, Plainfield

Approximately 71.2% of residents aged 16 years and older are currently employed. In 2008, of the 75,404 residents in the labor force, approximately 2,343 were unemployed (2.2%). This was significantly lower than the state unemployment percentage of 4.6%. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey)



**FIGURE E. Hendricks County Household Income (Projected Statistics from U.S. Census Bureau)**

As of September 2010, the county unemployment rate had increased to 7.9% and the state unemployment rate to 10.1%. (Source: STATS Indiana, using data from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development)

The median household income in Hendricks County is \$65,624, substantially more than the median household income of \$47,966 for the state of Indiana. Just over 5% of Hendricks County residents live in poverty. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 American Community Survey)

### Planning Considerations/Strategic Directions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the social/economic data pertaining to park and recreation planning.

- The county's growth puts pressure on existing recreation amenities and services, and increases the need for additional amenities to adequately serve residents.
- The increase in unemployment during the past few years suggests that the need for free and/or low cost recreation opportunities will be needed by families struggling with reduced income.
- Although the population as a whole is aging, Hendricks County has a greater than average number of families with children under the age of 18. Recreation opportunities for families will continue to be a strong need in Hendricks County. To meet the needs of both the aging population and young families, priority should be given to recreation amenities that appeal to a broad audience and are accessible to all ages.
- According to the current Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan 2006-2010, Hendricks County is included on its list of 14 "critical counties." The plan defines a critical county as one that does



not have the recommended local county outdoor recreation supply acreage and has a population growth rate that is higher than the 2000-05 population growth rate of 3.1% for Indiana.

- Using the 2005 census as a basis for population, the Indiana SCORP showed a shortfall of 5,899 acres from the 7,012 acres of local and regional public recreation areas recommended for Hendricks County. Using the 2010 census population, the recommended local and regional public recreation areas increase to 7,997 acres. As the population continues to increase, the county will fall further behind the recommended outdoor recreation supply acreage unless additional acreage is acquired/opened to residents.
- The following table uses projected population increases to determine the anticipated need for recreation land in Hendricks County through 2040. Anticipated need is based on Indiana SCORP standards calling for 20 acres of local (i.e. owned by township, municipal, county, or private organizations allowing public use) per 1,000 people and 35 acres of regional (i.e. owned by the State or Federal government) per 1,000 people.
- The projected need for recreation acreage indicates that land acquisition will be a long-term priority/need for Hendricks County and HCPR.

<b>Hendricks County Population Projection</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Population Projection*</b>	<b>Projected Recreation Land Need**</b>
2010 (actual from 2010 census)	145,448	7,997 ac.
2015	164,438	9,042 ac.
2020	175,070	9,631 ac.
2025	183,677	10,104 ac.
2030	190,370	10,472 ac.
2035	195,338	10,742 ac.
2040	198,893	10,940 ac.
*Source: <i>Indiana Population Projections 2010 - 2040</i> , The Indiana Business Research Center		
** Based on SCORP standard for counties of 55 acres per 1,000 population (20 acres/1000 of local recreation land and 35 acres/1000 of regional recreation land)		





Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in,  
where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.  
**John Muir**

# The Park and Recreation System: Administrative Review



## History

Since its inception in 2000, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board and Department has worked to acquire land, develop infrastructure to make parkland and trails available to the public, pursue protection and preservation of natural lands within the county and provide recreational opportunities to the citizens of Hendricks County and beyond. Highlights of the department's ten-year history include:

- The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board was established in March of 2000 by the Hendricks County Board of Commissioners.
- In 2001, HCPR was awarded a \$756,000 grant from the IDNR Heritage Trust Fund to purchase 232 acres of land in the Northwest corner of Hendricks County. This land was developed into McCloud Nature Park, the first park operated by HCPR. Also in 2001, the Parks and Recreation Board completed its first 5-year park and recreation master plan.
- In 2002, the park system received an IDNR Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to begin development of McCloud Nature Park.
- In 2003, the first employee of Hendricks County Parks and Recreation was hired, a part-time naturalist. Development of infrastructure in McCloud Nature Park continued, and the park was opened to the public in May 2003. The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board continued to establish and provide recreation amenities without the benefit of full-time employees until 2006. In July of that year the Park Board hired a park superintendent, the first full-time HCPR employee. That year also saw the completion of the second HCPR 5-year Park and Recreation Master Plan.
- Year round programming at McCloud Nature Park began in March of 2007. With this programming in place, attendance at McCloud Nature Park grew to more than 12,000 visitors in 2008.
- Also in 2008, Hendricks County Parks and Recreation received a \$665,000 Indiana Department of Transportation National Road Heritage Trail grant. The grant will fund land acquisition along the abandoned Vandalia railroad corridor in order to extend the trail within the county. HCPR also entered into a partnership with the Indiana Trails Fund to maintain and improve the portion of the Vandalia trail system lying between Coatesville and Amo.
- The Park Foundation of Hendricks County was formed in January of 2009 and was recognized by the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board as the fundraising advocate for the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department.
- In June of 2009, HCPR, the Indianapolis Airport Authority (IAA) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) reached an agreement to create Sodalís Nature Park. The 209-acre property in Guilford Township is designated as a permanent nature preserve. Sodalís Park is currently under development and is scheduled to open in 2011.
- An agreement was reached in January of 2010 to purchase 146 acres of land in Washington Township, near the center of Hendricks County. This property will be developed as the W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

## The Hendricks County Park Board

The Hendricks County Parks Board was established under Indiana Code 36-10-3 or General Park and Recreation Law that applies to all counties and all municipalities. The duties of the Board are outlined in Section 10 and are outlined below:

### Sec. 10. (a) The board shall:

- (1) exercise general supervision of and make rules for the department;
- (2) establish rules governing the use of the park and recreation facilities by the public;
- (3) provide police protection for its property and activities, either by requesting assistance from state, municipal, or county police authorities, or by having specified employees deputized as police officers; the deputized employees, however, are not eligible for police pension benefits or other emoluments of police officers;
- (4) appoint the necessary administrative officers of the department and fix their duties;
- (5) establish standards and qualifications for the appointment of all personnel and approve their appointments without regard to politics;
- (6) make recommendations and an annual report to the executive and fiscal body of the unit concerning the operation of the board and the status of park and recreation programs in the district;
- (7) prepare and submit an annual budget in the same manner as other executive departments of the unit; and
- (8) appoint a member of the board to serve on another kind of board or commission, whenever a



statute allows a park or recreation board to do this.

(b) In a municipality, the board shall fix the compensation of officers and personnel appointed under subsections (a)(4) and (a)(5), subject to IC 36-4-7-5 and IC 36-4-7-6.

As added by Acts 1981, P.L.309, SEC.110.

The powers of the Board are subsequently defined in Section 11 as outlined hereafter:

Sec. 11. (a) The board may:

- (1) enter into contracts and leases for facilities and services;
- (2) contract with persons for joint use of facilities for the operation of park and recreation programs and related services;
- (3) contract with another board, a unit, or a school corporation for the use of park and recreation facilities or services, and a township or school corporation may contract with the board for the use of park and recreation facilities or services;
- (4) acquire and dispose of real and personal property, either within or outside Indiana;
- (5) exercise the power of eminent domain under statutes available to municipalities;
- (6) sell, lease, or enter into a royalty contract for the natural or mineral resources of land that it owns, the money received to be deposited in a nonreverting capital fund of the board;
- (7) engage in self-supporting activities as prescribed by section 22 of this chapter;
- (8) contract for special and temporary services and for professional assistance;
- (9) delegate authority to perform ministerial acts in all cases except where final action of the board is necessary;
- (10) prepare, publish, and distribute reports and other materials relating to activities authorized by this chapter;
- (11) sue and be sued collectively by its legal name, as the "\_\_\_\_\_ (unit's name) Park and Recreation Board", with service of process being

had upon the president of the board, but costs may not be taxed against the board or its members in any action;

(12) invoke any legal, equitable, or special remedy for the enforcement of this chapter, a park or recreation ordinance, or the board's own action taken under either; and

(13) release and transfer, by resolution, a part of the area over which it has jurisdiction for park and recreational purposes to park authorities of another unit for park and recreational purposes upon petition of the park or recreation board of the acquiring unit.

(b) The board may also lease any buildings or grounds belonging to the unit and located within a park to a person for a period not to exceed fifty (50) years. The lease may authorize the lessee to provide upon the premises educational, research, veterinary, or other proper facilities for the exhibition of wild or domestic animals in wildlife parks, dining facilities, swimming facilities, golf courses, skating facilities, dancing facilities, amusement rides generally found in amusement parks, or other recreational facilities. A lease may be made for more than one (1) year only to the highest and best bidder, after notice that the lease will be made has been given by publication in accordance with IC 5-3-1.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (b), the board may lease buildings or grounds belonging to the unit for a period of more than one (1) year without soliciting the highest and best bidder or providing notice under IC 5-3-1 if:

- (1) the buildings or grounds are leased to an Indiana nonprofit corporation;
  - (2) the buildings or grounds are operated as a public golf course; and
  - (3) the golf course remains subject to rules and regulations promulgated by the board.
- As added by Acts 1981, P.L.309, SEC.110. Amended by Acts 1981, P.L.320, SEC.6; P.L.228-1986, SEC.1; P.L.35-1990, SEC.72; P.L.328-1995, SEC.1.

<b>FIGURE F. Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board - 2011</b>		
<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Term Ends</u>
Gary Emsweller	President	January 2013
Paul Miner	Vice-President	Ex-officio
Dennis Gibbs	Secretary	January 2014
Jaime Bohler Smith	Treasurer	January 2015
Bob Niemeyer		January 2014
Mike Ross		January 2012
Scott Foster		Ex-officio



The following Park Board meeting information is posted on the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation website:

The Hendricks County Park Board meets the first Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the main office building located at 955 E. Main in Danville, however dates are subject to change. Official Park Board meeting dates and agendas are posted one week prior to the scheduled dates at the main office and the Hendricks County Government Center, located at 355 S. Washington Street in Danville. Members of the public are always welcome to attend.

The Hendricks County Park Board provides long-term visioning, strategy development and guidance for and with the staff of Hendricks County Parks and Recreation. The staff implements strategies and works toward the larger vision of the Park Board through defined actions. Through the addition of staff members at HCPR, the activities of the Park Board have evolved to concentrate on strategy development while implementation is carried out by staff members.

### **Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department Organization**

Hendricks County residents elect the Hendricks County Commissioners, the Hendricks County Council and the Circuit Court Judge. These bodies along with the Hendricks County Extension Office and Soil and Water Conservation District appoint members of the the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board. In turn the HCPR board hires staff including the Park Superintendent and other park staff. The Park Board also assists in managing volunteers under the leadership of the Park Superintendent and staff. (See organization chart, next page.)

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department has three full-time positions: Superintendent, Park Manager and Park Naturalist. The Department is supplemented by six part-time staff including two assistant naturalists, two maintenance positions, and two office assistants.

Since 2000, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board has been extremely active in advancing the mission that guided the Department through its first ten years:

"To provide and protect outstanding natural, historic, education and recreation areas to serve Hendricks County residents and visitors." (The mission was updated as part of this master plan process.)

The Board and Department have acquired, developed and maintained parkland, provided programming and other services, and organized strategic fundraising activities.

### **County General Fund Allocation**

The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department's major source of funding is an annual appropriation from the Hendricks County General Fund (money paid by local taxpayers). The County Council approves a general fund appropriation based upon a HCPR budget request, projected tax income, and other county funding obligations.

Upon the establishment of the Park Board in 2000, the Board was awarded its first budget in 2001 of \$7,550. From 2003 through 2008, the parks and recreation appropriation from the general fund grew from \$17,500 to over \$748,000. More recently the county has required budget cuts related in part to the economic crisis that began in 2009.

HCPR initially saw a minimal budget cut of 3.5% in 2009. However, in 2010, the budget was significantly impacted with an additional 20% reduction and again by 24% for 2011. The budget cuts experienced by HCPR are common in the current economic climate. Many private and public sectors, especially state, county and municipal agencies have seen severe budget impacts due to the struggling economy and as a result, parks and recreation budgets around the state and country have been cut.

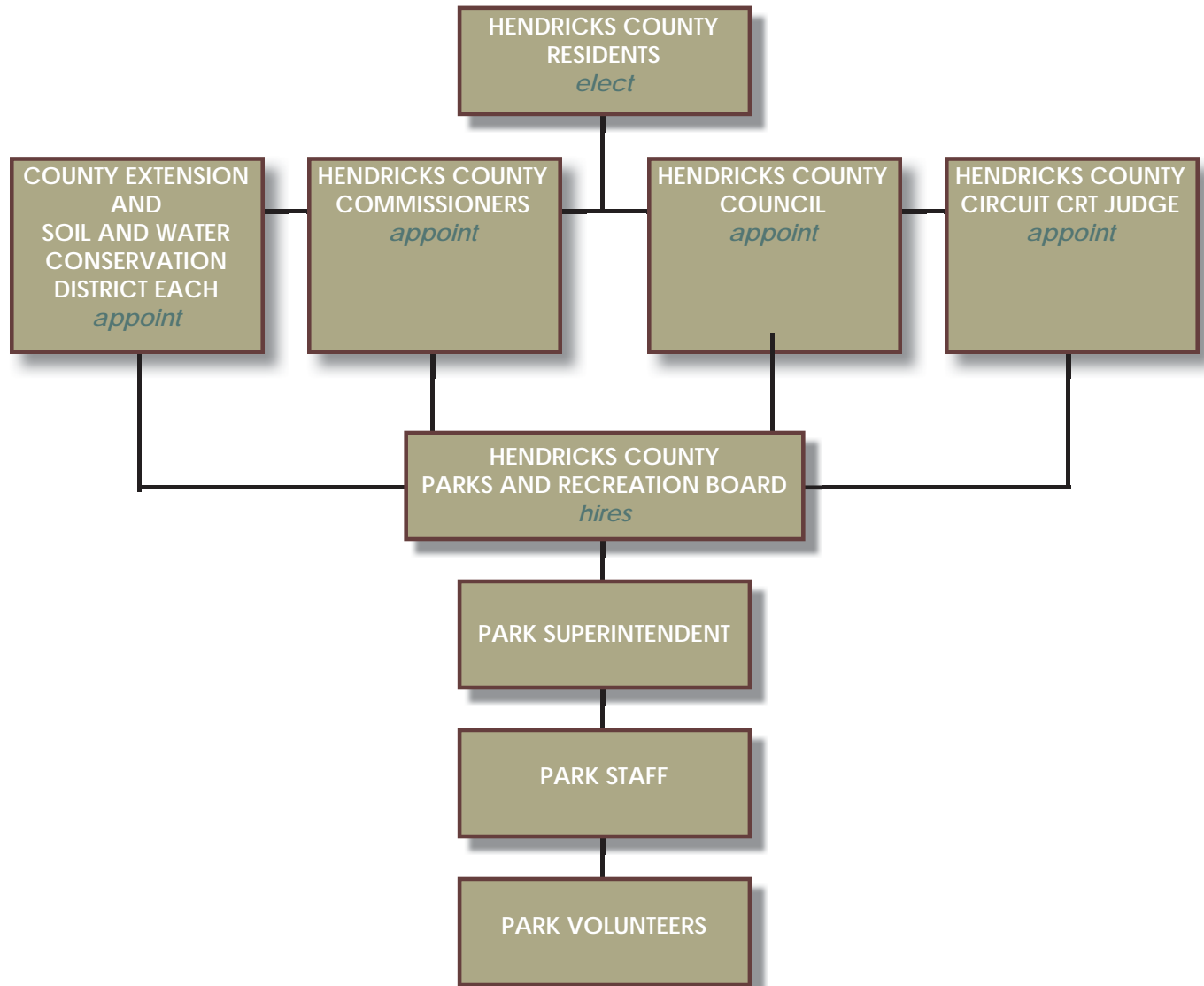
**FIGURE G. HCPR General Fund Appropriation  
(by the Hendricks County Council)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>General Fund Appropriation</b>
2001	\$7,550
2002	\$22,567
2003	\$17,500
2004	\$76,150
2005	\$85,850
2006	\$606,400
2007	\$689,106
2008	\$748,000
2009	\$721,618
2010	\$577,294
2011	\$438,100

## Administrative Structure



FIGURE H. Parks and Recreation Department Organization Chart





At the same time the HCPR budget is shrinking, county population is expanding. The need to meet recreation demand for a growing population places increased pressure on the park system budget. Using an estimated 2010 population of 147,000, HCPR received a per-resident allotment of \$3.93 from the general fund. In comparison (using a 2008 population of approximately 140,000) Hendricks County Parks and Recreation received \$5.80 from each resident from the general fund in 2008.

The department has seen shifts in its budget allocations due to the funding decrease and the increased need for services. While operation costs have not dramatically increased, seasonal employment, utilities and other maintenance costs have increased as programs and services provided to the public grew.

In 2008, 40% of the General Fund allocation was dedicated to operations including personnel, maintenance and operations, marketing and programs compared to a 77% allocation in 2011. While the department has made adjustments, for example, full-time personnel salaries have remained the same since 2009, there is simply less funding available for land acquisition and improvements to the park system.

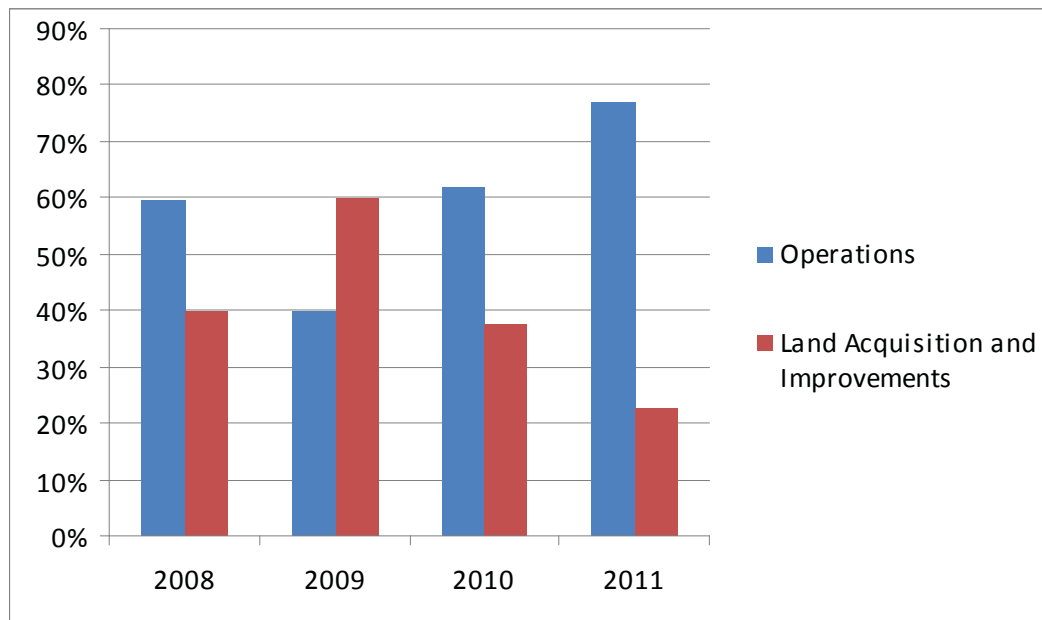
Approximately 23% of the General Fund allocation in 2011 was dedicated to land acquisition and other improvements. Comparatively, almost 60% of the General Fund allocation was dedicated in 2008 to land acquisition and other improvements.

The charts below demonstrate the evolution of General Fund allocations to operations costs and land acquisition and improvements between 2008 and 2011. Other variable funding sources, such as the Cumulative Capital Improvement Fund, can significantly supplement acquisitions and developments, however.

The percentage of the HCPR General Fund allocation from the County General Fund is outlined in the table on the next page. The table shows the County General Fund Budget from the years 2007 to 2011, HCPR General Fund allocation and the percentage of the County General Fund Budget the HCPR budget represents.

Economic difficulties and a redistribution of county and state funding has resulted in a decreased percentage of the County General Fund allocated to HCPR from 2.4% of the County General Fund in 2008 being allocated to HCPR to 1.46% in 2011

**FIGURE I. HCPR Distribution of General Fund Allocation**







<b>FIGURE J. Percentage of Hendricks County General Fund Contribution to HCPR</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>County General Fund Budget</b>	<b>HCPR General Fund Allocation</b>	<b>% of County General Fund attributed to HCPR</b>
2007	\$31,266,618	\$689,106	2.2
2008	\$31,438,631	\$748,000	2.4
2009	\$33,771,614	\$721,618	2.14
2010	\$32,998,392	\$577,294	1.75
2011	\$30,072,802*	\$438,100	1.46

\*(Pending acceptance by county council & DLGF)

## Revenue

### Grants

In addition to the general fund allocations, HCPR was awarded several substantial grants as outlined in the table below:

<b>FIGURE K. Grants Received by HCPR</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>	<b>Sponsoring Agency</b>
2000	\$5,000	Hunt Palmer Fund
2001	\$756,000	Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Heritage Trust Fund for McCloud Park land and acquisition
	\$10,000	White Lick Community Foundation
2002	\$200,000	IDNR Land and Water Conservation fund (LWCF) grant for infrastructure development at McCloud Park
	\$5,000	Indianapolis Power and Light Company (IPALCO) Golden Eagle Award
	\$5,000	White Lick Community Foundation
2004	\$7,000	Eel River Township Trustee donation for construction of shelter house in McCloud Park (\$5,000 donated by a private citizen)
	\$6,500	Indiana Power and Light (IPL) grant for forest restoration at McCloud Nature Park
2008	\$665,238	National Road Heritage Trust (NRHT) land acquisition grant for the Vandalia Trail



### **Innkeeper's Tax**

In October of 2005, the Hendricks County Council identified the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board as one of the primary recipients of the Innkeeper's Tax Ordinance 38-1997. The Innkeeper's Tax is a special tax received from visitors who stay in local hotels. A designated 1.5% of the Innkeeper tax may be used for the development of a county park, county fairground, or county promotion. The following table outlines funding received by the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation supplementing funding from the General Fund.

<b>FIGURE L. Innkeeper's Tax 2007 to 2010</b>	
2007	\$132,720
2008	\$155,920
2009	\$147,161
2010	\$138,061

### **Park Foundation of Hendricks County**

The Park Foundation of Hendricks County was formed in January of 2009 as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization and recognized by the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Board as fundraising advocate for the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department. Fundraising efforts of the Parks Foundation are to assist the County Parks Board in providing recreational opportunities for the residents of Hendricks County.

The Foundation is seeking donations and funding but has not dispersed funds directly to HCPR as of 2010. The Foundation has established a policy stipulating that over and above annual operating costs, 50% of any acquired funding will be dedicated to future development. Two small grants have been received by the Foundation for the department both in 2010:

- Hendricks County Convention & Visitors Bureau TED Fund: \$2,500, restricted for the bridge opening event in McCloud Nature Park
- Hendricks County Solid Waste District Community Grant: \$5,000, a 50% matching grant provided by HCPR, restricted for recycled materials or education about recycling and green initiatives in Hendricks County.

### **Conclusions**

As the population increases in Hendricks County, the demand for parks and recreation services will also increase. HCPR will experience an increased demand of recreational opportunities by citizens. In order to meet this increasing demand, HCPR will be impelled to turn to other significant sources of funding besides the traditional general fund allocation. Strategic fundraising, partnerships with local agencies and organizations, increased volunteerism and a clear definition of priorities will enable HCPR to best use its resources.

# ADA Accessibility Compliance



The mission of the Americans with Disabilities Act is to make it possible for everyone with a disability\* to live a life of freedom and equality. Passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President on July 26, 1990, the ADA protects the civil rights of people with disabilities in all aspects of employment, in accessing public services such as transportation and recreation, and guaranteeing access to public accommodations such as restaurants, stores, hotels and other types of buildings to which the public has access.

The 2008 American Community Survey (by the U.S. Census Bureau) estimated that 7.5% of the population in Hendricks County has a physical or mental disability. By age group those with a disability include:

- 1,110 residents or 3.1% of the population under 18
- 4,664 residents or 5.5% of the population ages 18 to 64
- 4316 residents or 31.1% of the population ages 65 years and older

In order to meet the recreation needs of those county residents and visitors with disabilities, it is the goal of HCPR to offer barrier-free facilities, programs and services that are inclusive of all users whenever feasible.

## McCloud Nature Park

McCloud Nature Park currently offers limited accessibility to those with disabilities.

### Accessible Parking

All roads and parking lots in the park are surfaced with loose gravel, which does not provide the stable, firm and slip-resistant surface required under the ADA.

Two accessible parking spaces have been designated in the parking lot adjacent to the Nature Center. However, as the lot is gravel, no striping or designation of the stall size has been made. The location of the designated accessible parking spaces are located along the shortest route to the main entrance of the Nature Center.

### Nature Center

A concrete ramp to the front door of the Nature

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*\*The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 defines an individual with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.*



*A Local Senior Group Visits McCloud Nature Park*

Center provides access for wheelchairs and the mobility impaired,

Inside, many amenities are accessible to those with mobility impairments, including displays and the observation window. Restrooms are provided in the Nature Center and are accessible.

### Picnic Shelter

The picnic shelter sits on a concrete pad. However, a gravel edge around the shelter, and a gravel path to the shelter, inhibit access. Accessible picnic benches were added in the summer of 2010.

### Trails

Trails in the park are either crushed stone or compacted earth. When well-compacted some of the trails are used by those using a wheelchair or walker or those with other limited mobility disabilities. Other trails, because of their loose or unstable surface and/or steep grade, are not readily accessible.

## Sodalis Nature Park

The opening of Sodalis Nature Park in the Spring of 2011 will bring additional accessible amenities to the HCPR system.

Accessible amenities in the park will include a paved parking lot, marked accessible parking stalls, a picnic shelter with accessible picnic benches, paved accessible trails, restroom facilities and a floating fishing pier. More rugged, unpaved trails with limited accessibility will wind through wooded areas.

## Programming

HCPR currently offers a wide variety of programming



for adults and children including activities held at the nature center or other indoor facilities such as community libraries and schools. Other activities, such as nature walks, are held at outdoor locations within the park.

It is the department's desire to accommodate those with disabilities in all programming activities. In general, the programs held at the McCloud Nature Park Nature Center or other indoor locations can be adapted to accommodate those with disabilities. The department has successfully done this in the past when an individual with a disability has attended a school or other educational program.

As most of McCloud Nature Park's outdoor amenities are not currently accessible, the outdoor programs are, for the most part, not readily adaptable to those with some disabilities. Given the nature of the McCloud Park terrain, it is unlikely that the park will ever be fully accessible. However, measures to add accessible routes to those amenities that could be accessible will open additional programming opportunities at the park.

Finally, the accessible outdoor amenities at Sodalis Nature Park will open additional opportunities for pro-

gramming that is accessible to all, including fishing and nature walks.

### **Future Accessibility Considerations**

In addition to the new amenities that will be available upon the opening of Sodalis Nature Park, recommendations to improve access to HCPR amenities and programs include:

- Add paved parking surfaces at the accessible parking stalls in McCloud Nature Park, and a paved accessible route from the parking area to the Nature Center and to the Picnic Shelter.
- Include information on the HCPR website to indicate those amenities and programs that are accessible, including trail ratings, and how an accessibility complaint or inquiry may be made.
- Add additional nature center activities that target different senses such as audio books, tactile displays, and computer games.
- Provide accessible routes to park amenities as developed.



*The HCPR Staff Finds Creative Solutions to Make Amenities Accessible*



# McCloud Nature Park



**Location:** 8518 N. Hughes Road, North Salem

**Size:** 232 Acres

**Type:** Regional Nature Park

**Condition:** Excellent

**Accessibility:** Limited

## General Description:

Located in northwest township of Eel River, McCloud Nature Park is the department's first park. At 232 acres, it is also the largest park in Hendricks County. The park's location is perceived, by some, as remote. The lack of directional signage to the park has been noted as a concern.

The park's varied terrain includes wetlands, open grasslands, the Big Walnut Creek, seeps and forested hills. An updated Master Plan, completed in 2008, proposes expanding and protecting the natural qualities of the park for education and passive recreation purposes, a goal supported by public and stakeholder comments. The variety of natural communities present in the park offer opportunities to explore and compare different ecosystems

Amenities have been added to the park over time as funding has been available. For example, a re-claimed bridge, signage and additional nature trails were constructed in 2010. The department plans to continue this course of action, building the amenities outlined in the 2008 master plan only as resources become available. This approach offers numerous opportunities to celebrate accomplishments with the public and county officials.

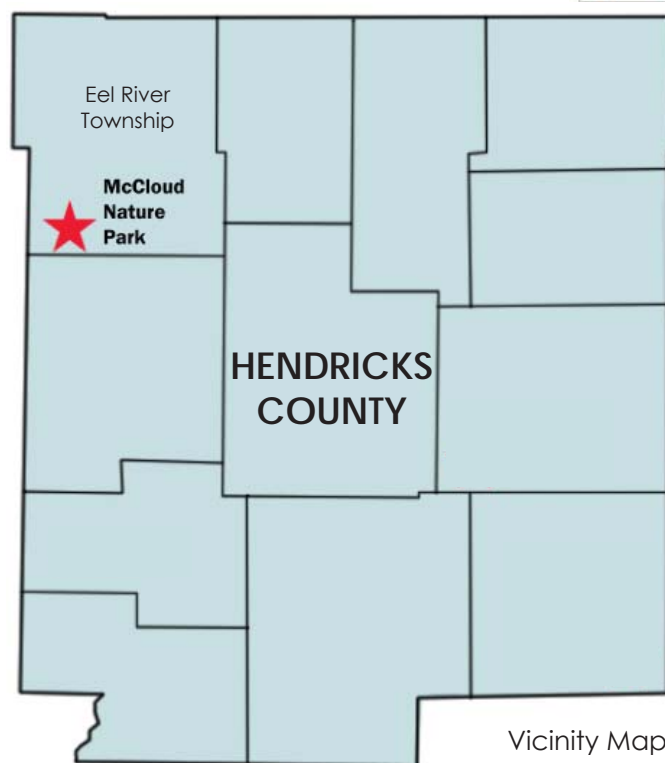
Master Plan amenities not yet constructed include paved roads/paths, a new nature center, a playground, additional trails, paved parking, an arboretum, and wetlands and associated boardwalks.

## Existing Amenities/Programs:

- Nature Center
- 6.5 miles of hiking trail network
- Big Walnut Creek access
- Native prairie and woodland communities
- Astronomy pads and viewing programs
- Wetland
- Trails and bridge
- Family programming
- Pavilion

## Potential Improvements/Programs:

- Nature-oriented playground
- Wetland restoration and boardwalk construction
- Additional event pavilions



Vicinity Map



Picnic Area and Shelter



Big Walnut Creek Bridge



Trail Through Prairie

- Educational programming on watershed management, and roles/benefits of wetlands
- Interpretive signage
- Wayfinding/Directional Signage to Park
- Planning/funding for new nature center.

# McCloud Nature Park - Continued





# Sodalis Nature Park



**Location:** Guilford Township

**Size:** 209 Acres

**Type:** Regional Nature Park

**Conditions:** N/A

**Accessibility:** N/A

## General Description:

Sodalis Nature Park is the result of an innovative partnership agreement between Hendricks County Parks and Recreation, the Indianapolis Airport Authority and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The agreement permits HCPR to create a nature park on a portion of land that has been set aside for habitat preservation for the endangered Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*).

A 2009 master plan for the park proposes a network of trails and passive recreational opportunities. Most of the amenities identified in the park's master plan will be in place when the park opens in 2011. Parking, however, has been broken into two construction phases. Initially 50+ parking stalls will be provided. The master plan calls for additional parking to be added as visitation levels dictate.

The park design includes over 3 miles of natural walking trails, a universally accessible trail, five accessible picnic areas with accessible picnic benches, and a fully accessible fishing platform that extends into the 5.5 acre pond. A Rain Garden with native plantings will help to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality, while providing a natural area to attract birds and butterflies.

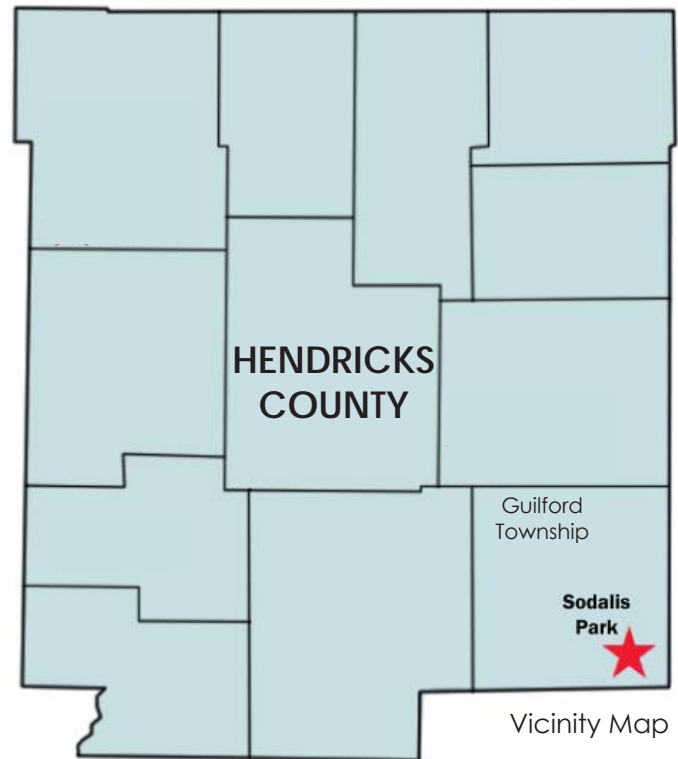
As part of the agreement, HCPR will provide educational programming related to the Indiana Bat.

## Existing Amenities/Programs:

- N/A

## Potential Improvements/Programs:

- Trail Construction, including Accessible Trails
- Park Infrastructure
- Accessible Picnic Area
- Fishing Pier
- Public Pavilion for Larger Groups/Events
- Nature Education Programming
- Fishing Clinic
- Interpretive Signage
- Programming and education on:
  - The Indiana Bat
  - Rain Gardens/Stormwater Management
  - Nature Preserves
  - Fishing Clinics



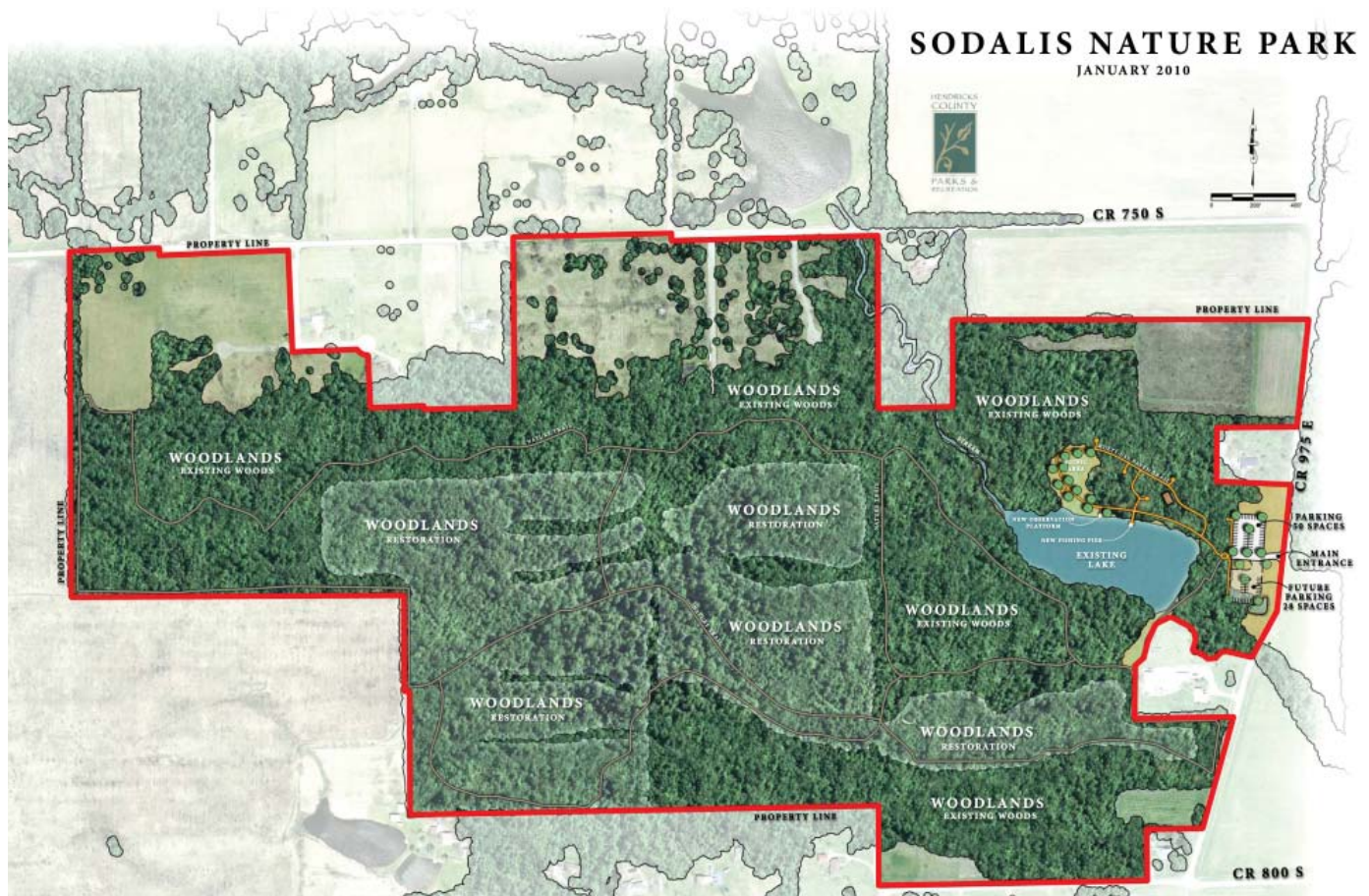
Vicinity Map



Existing Pond



Existing Meadow





# W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park



**Location:** Southwest corner of Washington Township

**Size:** 140 Acres

**Type:** Regional Nature Park

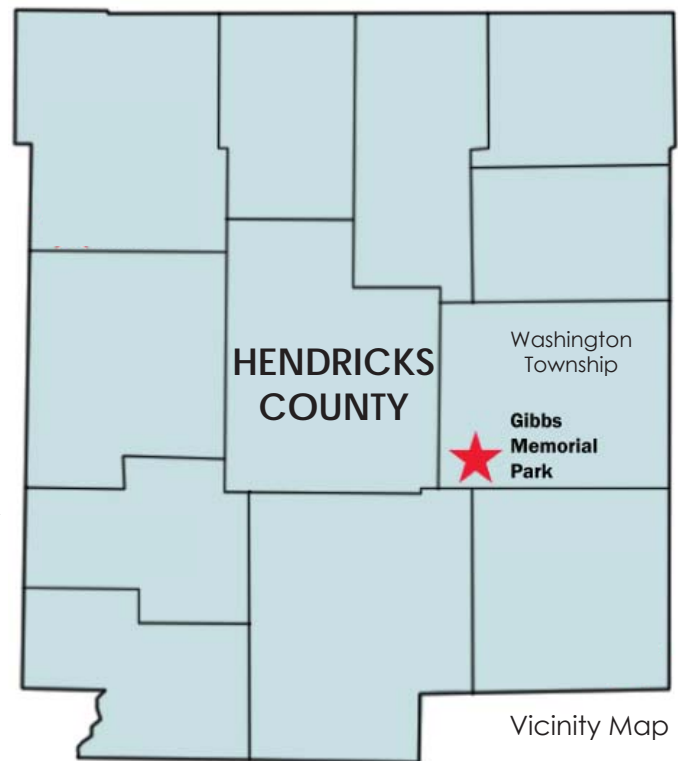
**Conditions:** N/A

**Accessibility:** N/A

## General Description:

Land for the W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park was acquired in January 2010 from John and Lydia Gibbs who currently live on the property and are lifelong Hendricks County residents. The land includes a working farm and an approximately 40 acre wooded area that sits in a drainage basin. A master plan for developing this park has not yet been conducted.

Given the size and location of this property, the park has the potential to become another Hendricks County regional park. Its location is particularly important as it sits within Washington Township, a rapidly growing area of the county. As development occurs adjacent to the park, special consideration should be given to linking it to future trails.



## Existing Amenities/Programs:

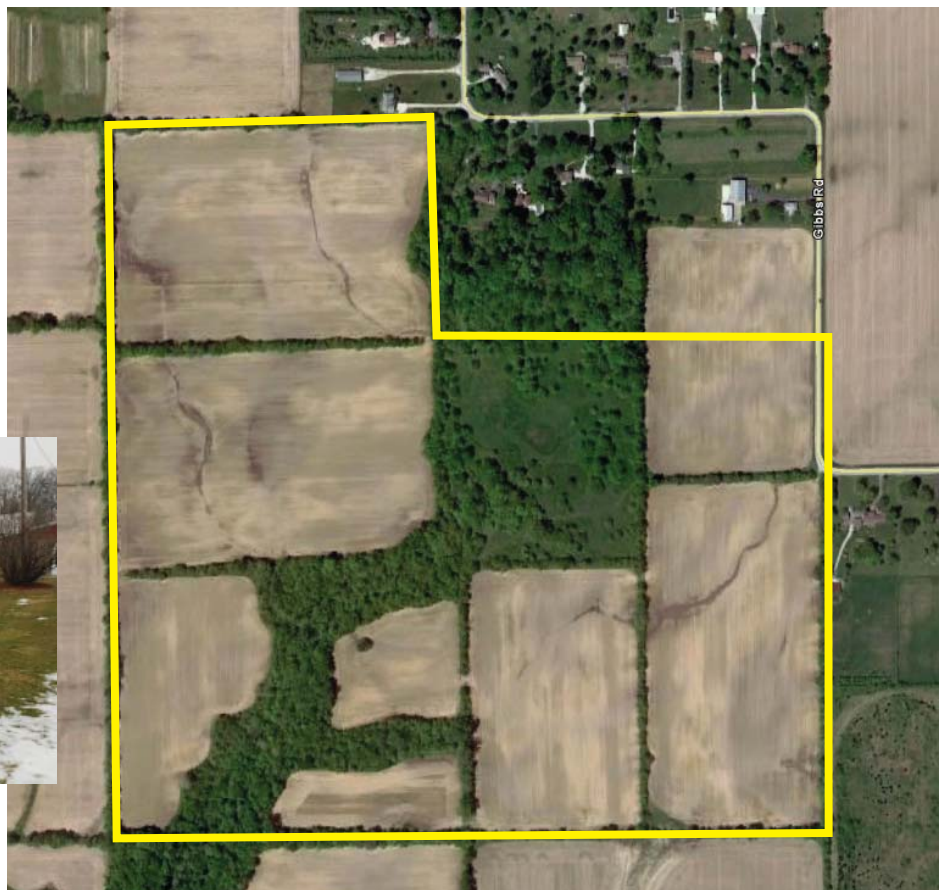
- Not Developed

## Potential Improvements/Programs:

- Park Master Plan
- Regional Park
- Trails
- Nature park developments
- Community Garden
- Opportunities to celebrate agriculture roots of Hendricks County
- Connect to county trail system.



*John and Lydia Gibbs*



Park Property Boundaries

# Vandalia Trail



**Location:** Between Coatesville and Amo in southwest Hendricks County

**Size:** 3 Miles

**Type:** Regional Nature Park

**Conditions:** Good

**Accessibility:** Fair

## General Description:

The Vandalia Trail is a rustic 3-mile multi-use trail for hiking, off-road bicycling, and horseback riding connecting the towns of Amo & Coatesville in southwest Hendricks County. The trail opened in 2005 through the efforts of volunteers, the Indiana Trails Fund, and private donations.

The Vandalia Trail follows the abandoned Vandalia rail corridor and is also part of the proposed National Heritage Road Trail, an Indiana cross-state trail that will extend 150 miles through 30 communities when completed. In addition to the Coatesville-Amo segment, another 5-mile segment of the Vandalia Trail has been constructed in Plainfield as part of the town's trail network.

In November 2008, INDOT awarded a grant of \$665,000 to HCPR for acquisition of property or easements to allow for future extension of the Vandalia Trail / National Road Heritage Trail across Hendricks County. The objective of the extension is to connect the portions of the trail already existing in Plainfield, Amo, and Coatesville to Clayton, Cartersburg, and Putnam County.

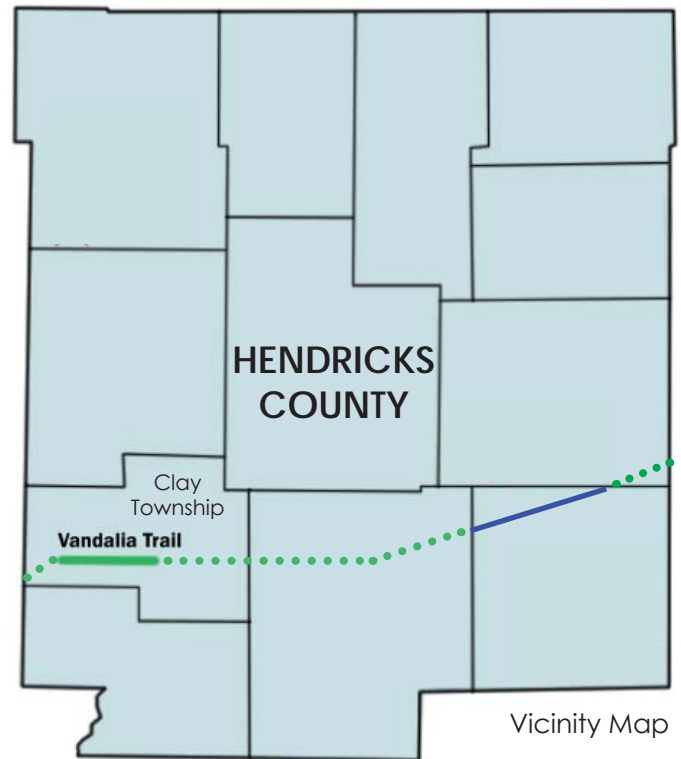
Although HCPR does not own the trail, the department established a partnership with the Indiana Trails Fund in 2007 and maintains the portion of trail connecting Amo and Coatesville.

## Existing Amenities/Programs:

- Hiking/walking Trail
- Equestrian Trail
- Biking Trail
- Undeveloped Trail Heads at Amo and Coatesville

## Potential Improvements/Programs:

- Property Acquisition
- Connections to other County Trails
- Develop Trailhead Locations
- Pave Trail
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage
- Education programming on trails and greenways as wildlife corridors.



Equestrian Trail and Signage



The Vandalia Trail Supports Hiking/Off Road Biking



# Recreation Programming and Activities



HCPR provides programs and activities aimed at a variety of ages, user groups and interests. These include department-sponsored activities held at McCloud Nature Park and its nature center. The department's outreach and education program also brings programs and activities to other parks in Hendricks County, as well as county schools and libraries. The department periodically works with other agencies or groups to offer unique program opportunities or to meet the needs of a particular group. For example, scouts working on an activity badge.

New, revised and additional programs and recreational activities, are offered every year in response to changing community needs and interests.

Recent programming and activities include the following (thus far all public programs have been free of charge):

## Field Trips to McCloud Nature Park

Educational programs at the park have been designed to meet Indiana Academic Standards. Scheduled activities are intended to last approximately two hours and are limited to 60 students. Programs are subject to availability.

## School Outreach Programs

The outreach programs bring nature indoors, through the park naturalist and a wide variety of learning materials. Hands-on opportunities are the focus for these activities.

## Library Programs

Aimed at elementary school children, the library programs include a nature-related story and an associated craft. The program is held monthly at the Coatesville Public Library, Brownsburg Public Library, Clayton Public Library, Plainfield - Guilford Township



*School Groups Regularly Visit the Nature Center*



*HCPR Programs Include 'Hands-On' Activities*

Public Library, Avon-Washington Township Public Library and Danville Public Library.

## Scout Programs

Scout groups can participate in programs that can fulfill badge requirements. The Park Naturalist and trained staff lead the troops through fun games, activities and exercises that meet requirements outlined in the scouting handbooks. Historically, programs have been offered free of charge and occur on dedicated Sundays each month, with limited space availability.

## Fishing

Fishing poles are available to be checked-out from the McCloud Nature Park Nature center during operating hours. Tackle is provided. However, bait must be supplied by the user.

Participant is responsible for compliance to DNR licensing laws, and must be 18 years of age to check-out fishing equipment.

## Bird Watching

Bird watching kits are available for check-out at McCloud Nature Park Nature Center. Kits Include:

- Binoculars
- Birding Guides
- Bird Checklist
- Identifiers



*Snow Brings Outdoor Fun at McCloud Nature Park*

### **GPS**

Several Garmin GPS units are available for check-out at the McCloud Nature Park Nature Center. Users can participate in a geocache hunt in the park. Cache locations are furnished at the Nature Center and GPS users can use the location coordinates to find the caches.

### **Snowshoes**

To encourage winter recreation, snowshoes are available for use at the McCloud Nature Park Nature Center. Users may borrow the snowshoes for winter hikes in the park.

### **Sunday Stroll**

Every Sunday a naturalist provides a guided tour showcasing seasonal attractions and wildlife sightings in McCloud Nature Park.



*Eager Egg Hunters Race to Gather Goodies*

### **Educational Programs and Family Activities**

Held regularly at McCloud Nature Park, typically on Saturdays, these programs cover a wide range of topics and are sometimes conducted in conjunction with other groups. In 2010, these programs included:

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Family Outdoor Game Day
- Hendricks Honeybees
- Ecology of the Big Walnut Creek
- Family Adventure Nature Challenge
- Outdoor Skills Workshop
- Build a Bat Box
- Spring Wildflower Walk
- Sweetheart Hike in the Park
- Winter Snow Sports Weekend
- Movie Time at McCloud
- Maple Sugar Day (Included Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser for the Park)
- Earth Day

### **Fun Run**

Held Wednesday evenings throughout the summer, the Fun Run is an untimed event, held at different locations of the county. Marked 1-mile and 5K courses are offered. The event is widely popular, attracting residents from throughout the county. Depending upon the location, the event may be held in conjunction with another park system in Hendricks County. The variety of locations introduces participants to recreation amenities throughout the county.





# Hendricks County Trail System

A key finding of this master plan is the widespread desire of Hendricks County residents and stakeholders for additional trails and pedestrian corridors within the county. This desire for more trails and greater connectivity was identified as a top priority in the stakeholder meetings, the community survey, and findings of other Hendricks County Park and Recreation providers in their own research and planning efforts. (Refer to Hendricks County Planning Documents, page twelve.)

The types of trails desired include connector trails within Hendricks County communities, between communities (inside and outside of Hendricks County), nature trails and equestrian trails. Residents and stakeholders stated various benefits for an extended trail system, including increased recreation opportunities, connectivity to parks, schools and other area amenities, improved health, improved safety, and increased accessibility.

Also prevalent among residents and stakeholders is the desire for HCPR to take an active role in the county's trail system either as a facilitator, developer, manager or some combination of these. While the appropriate degree of HCPR involvement was not clearly defined in the public participation process, a general consensus is that the department is uniquely placed to offer a county-wide perspective to trail development.

## Hendricks County Trail Providers

Seven entities are involved in trail development, maintenance and/or management within the county. Of these, three entities have a county-wide focus and are free to pursue trail development in both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. These are:

- Hendricks County Parks and Recreation
- B&O Trail Association
- Hendricks County Trail Development Association

The remaining trail providers primarily serve one of the incorporated areas within the county, and focus on providing trails within a single community. They include:

- Town of Avon
- Town of Brownsburg
- Town of Danville
- Town of Plainfield

## Hendricks County Parks and Recreation

As a county-wide entity, HCPR can pursue and facilitate the development of trails anywhere in the *Future*



*Trail Route, Sodalis Nature Park*

county. Currently, the department helps to manage and maintain 3 miles of the Vandalia Trail located between Coatesville and Amo.

In 2008, HCPR received a National Road Heritage Trust land acquisition grant of \$665,238. This grant is to be used to fund the purchase of Vandalia Trail right of way.

## B&O Trail Association (BOTA)

This non-profit organization focuses its efforts on developing the B&O Trail along an abandoned rail line that stretches from Indianapolis, through Hendricks County to Montezuma, Indiana. Currently the group has 1,000 feet of trail in service in Hendricks County with two additional segments (one 1.5 miles and the other 2.0 miles) under construction.

At this time, all constructed segments of the B&O Trail are located within Hendricks County. The group's reach will extend beyond Hendricks County as trail segments in other counties develop over time.

## Hendricks County Trail Development Association (HCTDA)

Although a separate entity, with a unique Board of Directors, HCTDA shares a website and a mission statement with BOTA. The mission of both organizations is "*to promote pollution-free transportation alternatives, improve the quality of life, enhance local communities, preserve a passage to our history, and provide opportunities for citizens to enjoy Indiana's natural environment.*"

While BOTA's trail development efforts will ultimately



span several counties, the HCTDA is focused on trail development within Hendricks County. As well, this organization differs in that it does not focus exclusively on the B&O Trail. For example, the group has been instrumental in the development of the portion of the Vandalia Trail located between Coatesville and Amo.

#### **Town of Avon**

The town of Avon trail system includes 2.0 miles of 10' paved multiuse trails, including a segment that connects the Avon Town Hall to the Avon Washington Township Library. The town also offers unpaved nature trails through 12.5 acres of undeveloped park land at the Avon Town Hall Park.

In 2011 the town will begin construction of an additional trail segment from US 36 to County Road 100 South along White Lick Creek.

#### **Town of Brownsburg**

The town currently offers paved pedestrian trails at Williams Park and Arbuckle Park. However, additional trail corridors to be located throughout the community and connecting to the B&O Trail were identified as part of a 2008 Greenway Masterplan.

The master plan included a prioritization of the proposed trails and identified a trail corridor to connect the library, school campus and other existing and proposed community amenities as the top priority. With the award of two grants for trail development (one awarded, and the second pending) Brownsburg is poised to significantly increase its trail offerings in the next few years with the construction of those trails identified as the highest priority in the master plan.

#### **Town of Danville**

The town's trail system includes a ¾-mile paved trail in Ellis Park and two miles of all-terrain trails in Blanton Woods. These trails are connected, and also connect to the town's sidewalk system

#### **Town of Plainfield**

Plainfield currently offers approximately 12.8 miles of trails within its incorporated limits. Another 3.29 miles have been identified as future trail projects in the town's trail plan.

The Plainfield trail system includes a 5.0-mile paved segment of the Vandalia Trail, with additional trail construction to come.

### **Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Regional Pedestrian Plan**

The Indianapolis MPO area consists of Marion County and portions of the seven counties surrounding it, including the Eastern part of Hendricks County.

#### **Regional Pedestrian Map**

As part of its regional planning efforts, the Indianapolis MPO has issued several reports and planning documents focused on regional pedestrian planning, including a map of proposed pedestrian routes (both on street and off street) for Hendricks County. Although the map is useful in establishing a preliminary vision for an interconnected and well-developed trail system in Hendricks County, it does not distinguish between existing trails, proposed trails with established routes, and pedestrian routes that do not as yet have an associated feasibility study.

#### **B&O Trail Project Study**

In its 2010 Central Indiana Campaign report, the MPO outlined a series of proposed projects that both link to the region's Indianapolis core and benefit outlying communities. Included in this list was the B&O Trail which passes through Marion and Hendricks Counties. According to the report, the benefits of this trail are many:

"The B&O Trail project will expand the alternative transportation system within Indianapolis and the western vision and establish a built segment of the larger statewide vision for the trail that will extend 65 miles west to Montezuma, IN. The trail will provide an alternative to vehicular trips by providing multi-modal links to employment facilities, retail centers, schools, universities, transit, libraries, cultural amenities, recreational/sport facilities, bike lanes, parks and other established trails."

The Indianapolis MPO has designated the trail as an important connector link for its regional trail system.

#### **Greater Indianapolis Transit Studies**

Mass transit to serve the greater Indianapolis region is a topic of growing study and discussion. Many planning, business, government and private groups have worked to identify how and where mass transit may be incorporated to serve Marion county and connect the nine counties surrounding it. The most recent plan, was released in December 2010 by the Indianapolis Regional Transportation Council, a coalition of elected officials and business leaders. The plan proposes a system of rail, bus rapid transit and



express bus routes to serve the region, including Hendricks County.

While the specifics of mass transit are, as yet, undetermined, trail links to future amenities within Hendricks County should be planned as the regional system develops. Such links could provide viable transportation options for users who cannot, or choose not, to drive a personal vehicle. The system could also help to reduce traffic congestion, and at the same time promote the environmental health of the county.



*Vandalia Trailhead, Amo*

### Assessment of Current Hendricks County Trail System

In the past decade, the various trail providers within the county have begun to develop a patchwork of trail systems of varying sizes and complexity. The Plainfield Trail network, for example, currently offers an interconnected system serving its community, while other trail systems within the county are in earlier stages of development.

In general, the focus of each of the seven trail providers within the county has been somewhat limited to either a particular community/incorporated area, or a specific trail. As well, the Hendricks County does not currently have a comprehensive trail master plan to provide an in depth look at a feasible, comprehensive pedestrian and trail network for the entire county. Trail planning to date has been conducted on a more localized level.

Development of trails within larger incorporated areas of the county is currently planned, developed

and managed by the respective communities. As with park development in the incorporated areas, HCPR will most likely have a limited role to play in trail development within those communities. Instead, as a county park system, HCPR is well placed to lead a county-wide perspective and planning effort for trail development, facilitate links between trail systems, and to facilitate trail development and management in unincorporated areas.

Given its county-wide jurisdiction, HCPR may also be the most suitable entity to actively develop and manage portions of trail systems located in unincorporated areas, possibly in conjunction with nonprofit trail providers. The department's management of a portion of the Vandalia Trail, and its future efforts to acquire right of the way for the trail, serve as an important pilot program for how such a relationship can work.

### Planning Considerations/Strategic Directions

Trail use and the value of a trail system typically grow as the length and number of trails increases, and additional trail connections are made. While connections between the various trail systems are currently non-existent, Hendricks County does have the makings of a county-wide trail system that would link many of the major population centers.

- The proposed B&O Trail offers an east/west artery in the northern half of the county. When completed it will connect Brownsburg and North Salem. A connection with McCloud Nature Park would be feasible, ideally along the Big Walnut Creek Corridor.
- The proposed Vandalia Trail provides another east/west artery in the southern half of the county. This trail will connect Plainfield, Clayton, Amo and Coatesville when completed.
- Linking the existing Plainfield and Avon Trail systems to each other and to the B&O Trail will provide a strong north/south backbone for the trail system and will connect three of the largest population centers in the county.

In considering priorities for future trail development in the county, a practical first step is to build upon existing trail amenities and planned trails to connect many of the large population centers in the county. As outlined above, this would serve to establish a solid framework of trail connections. Additional planning efforts will be needed to iden-





*The Vandalia Trail between Amo and Coatesville is a rustic trail suitable for hiking and off-road biking.*

tify other trail corridors and links in order to connect other population centers, such as Danville and Pittsboro, as well as amenities, such as McCloud Nature Park, to the extended trail network.

Accordingly, the following recommendations which will span the next five years and beyond, first focus on realizing the potential of existing/planned trails and then planning for future trail extensions.

- Purchase additional trail right of way for the Vandalia Trail using the National Heritage Trail Land Acquisition Grant. (HCPR Role: full responsibility )
- Develop connections between the Avon, Plainfield and Brownsburg Trail Systems, and the B&O Trail System. (HCPR Role: advocate)
- Fully develop the B&O and Vandalia Trails, including pavement of the Vandalia Trail. (HCPR Role: at a minimum, advocate, although a more active role may be necessary)
- Develop a county wide trail master plan to identify additional trail links including:
  - Connecting all major population centers to a trail network
  - Providing a connection from McCloud Nature Park and Sodalis Nature Park to the trail system
  - Identifying other trail corridors, particularly other north/south oriented corridors in the central and western portions of the county.
  - Connecting to mass transit amenities as they are developed within and adjacent to the county.
  - (HCPR Role: develop the master plan)



## Other County/Regional Recreation Facilities

A wide variety of programs and amenities are offered to Hendricks County residents and visitors. Many are free and open to the public. Others have associated fees.

Residents also enjoy regional recreation opportunities located outside of the county. During the stakeholder and public meetings, participants frequently mentioned amenities located in the broader Indianapolis Metropolitan area, including those in Marion and Hamilton Counties.

The following list catalogues recreation amenities offered by entities other than the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department.

### Other Hendricks County Park Systems

#### Town of Avon

- Avon Town Hall Park
  - Walking trails
  - Playground
- Pecar Park

#### Washington Township Park (Washington Township)

- Bark Park
- Playground
- Walking trails
- Mountain biking trails
- Splash Pad
- Community Center

#### Town of Brownsburg

- Arbuckle Acres
- Cardinal Delaware Property
- Stephens Park
- Williams Park
- Veterans Park

#### Town of Danville

- Ellis Park
  - Aquatic Center
  - Basketball courts
  - Ball diamonds
  - Trails
  - Tennis courts
  - Volleyball
  - Playgrounds
  - Horseshoes
  - Amphitheater
  - Two shelters
  - Gazebo
- Blanton Woods
  - Outdoor education laboratory
  - Upland forest, floodplain and meadows

- Clear Creek Park
- Twin Bridges Recreational Area
  - In conjunction with Twin Bridges Recycling
  - Ball diamonds
  - Soccer Fields
  - Trails
  - Two shelters

#### Town of Plainfield

- Anderson Park
- Bob Ward Park
- Franklin Park
- Friendship Gardens
- Newby Lane Park (under development)
- Swinford Park
- Plainfield Recreation & Aquatic Center
- Plainfield Youth Athletic Complex

#### Guilford Township

- Hummel Park
  - Community Center
  - Paved trail and nature trails
  - Picnic shelter
  - Gazebo
  - Sports fields
  - Playground

#### Town of Pittsboro

- Malcom O. Scamahorn Memorial Park:
  - 14 acres
  - Community Center
  - Little League ball diamond
  - Volleyball, basketball and horseshoe courts
  - Playground
  - Shelter
  - Walking path
- Scott Park
  - Ball diamond
  - Basketball court
  - Shelter
  - Picnic area
- Esther Park
  - Undeveloped
  - Offers passive recreation and nature areas
- Lincoln Park West

#### Town of Amo

- Amo Town Park

#### Town of Cartersburg

- Cartersburg Town Park

#### Town of Clayton

- Lambert Park



### **Town of Coatesville**

- Coatesville Town Park

### **Town of Lizton**

- Lizton Town Park

### **Town of North Salem**

- North Salem Town Park (Lion's Club)

### **Private Recreation Facilities**

- YMCA – Avon (under construction completion mid-May 2011)
  - 100,000 sq. ft. facility on 28.8 acres

### **Ball Leagues**

- Plainfield Teenage Baseball League
- AJAA – Avon Junior Athletic Association
  - Avon
- Plainfield Optimist Club Sport Leagues
- Brownsburg Girls Softball League
- Brownsburg Junior Basketball League
- Brownsburg Junior Football League
- Brownsburg Little League Baseball
- Brownsburg Rugby
- Brownsburg Swim Club
- West District YMCA- various locations
- Danville Little Leagues
- Danville Optimist Youth Soccer League
- Tri-West Youth Football League

### **Pools or water play opportunities**

- Gill Family Aquatic Center
  - Located in Ellis Park, Danville
  - Outdoor
- Splash Island
  - Located at the Plainfield Aquatic Center
  - Indoor & outdoor facilities
- Splash Pad, Washington Township Parks

### **Golf courses**

- White Lick Golf Club, Brownsburg
- Deer Creek Golf Course, Clayton
- Friendswood Golf Course, Camby
- Quail Creek Golf Course, Pittsboro
- Pittsboro Golf Course, Pittsboro
- Prestwick Country Club (Private), Avon
- Oak Tree Golf Course, Plainfield
- Tomahawk Hills Golf Course, Jamestown
- Twin Bridges Golf Course, Danville,
- West Chase Golf Club, Brownsburg

### **Trails/hiking**

- B&O Trail: [www.botrail.org](http://www.botrail.org)
- Community Trails –

- Ellis Park to Blanton House & Woods
- Danville Parks
- Plainfield Greenways
  - Plainfield Parks & Recreation
- Vandalia Trail
  - Amo – Coatesville: HCPE
- Avon Town Park Trail
- Williams Park
  - Brownsburg Parks & Recreation

### **Archery**

- Twin Bridges Archery, Danville

### **Camping**

- Camping is offered at the Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds, primarily during the 4-H fair
- Raceview Camping, Brownsburg, only during special race events

### **Fishing**

Although the following opportunities have been culled from public lakes and waterways in Indiana, it should be noted very few have public access.

- Danville Conservation Club Lake/Dam
- Donahue Lake/Dam
- Elmer Martens Lake/Dam
- Forest Lake/Dam – Washington Township Park
- Indianhead Lake
- Jeto Lake
- Lakeview Lake/Dam
- Lakeland Manor Lake/Dam
- Ledgewood Lake
- Lewis Lake/Dam
- Norman Lake
- Penn Lake
- Pins Way Lake/Dam
- Stout Lake/Dam
- Warren Lake/Dam
- Hummel Park ponds
- Big Walnut Creek
- Abner Creek
- Army Branch
- Block Creek
- Bullard Creek
- Crest Branch
- Cosner Branch
- Crittenden Creek
- Eagle Crest Creek
- Fishback Creek
- Grassy Branch
- Hill Creek
- Hook Creek
- Hughes Branch





- Hunt Creek
- McCord Creek
- Middle Fork Big Walnut
- Pump Run
- Raccoon Creek
- Ramp Run
- Reel Creek
- Royal Run
- Sawmill Run
- Schooler Creek
- Sink Creek
- Sinker Creek
- South Fork Eel River
- Thompson Creek
- Middle Fork White Lick Creek – Washington Township Park
- West Fork White Lick Creek-Ellis Park

### **Boating**

Canoeing is achievable on Big Walnut Creek and the Western fork of White Lick Creek depending on seasonal precipitation. Only McCloud Nature Park offers public access to Big Walnut Creek.

### **Motor Sports**

- Lucas Oil Raceway Park, Brownsburg

### **Equestrian**

Vandalia Trail – path runs parallel to walking trail between Amo and Coatesville

### **Frisbee Golf Courses**

- Avon Town Hall Park

### **Ball diamonds or sports fields and/or complexes**

- Avon
  - AJAA – Avon Junior Athletic Association
  - Avon Softball Park
  - Fusion Soccer Complex
- Belleville
  - Belleville Ball Diamonds
- Brownsburg
  - Brownsburg Girls Softball Diamonds
  - Brownsburg Little League Diamonds
  - Brownsburg Soccer Fields
- Danville
  - Danville Little League
  - Danville Softball Diamonds
  - Twin Bridges Soccer Field
- Plainfield
  - Hummel Park
  - Franklin Park
  - Swinford Park
  - Plainfield Youth Athletic Complex

- White Lick Creek Park and Soccer
- Pittsboro
  - Scamahorn Park
  - Esther Park
  - Scott Park
- Ball diamonds and sports fields are also located at multiple schools located throughout the county.

### **Nature Centers and/or preserves**

- Burnett Woods – Central Indiana Land Trust, Avon. Located in an area of intense development this 68-acre nature preserve dominated by tall black walnut, oak, hickory, maple, and tulip poplar trees. The forest floor and understory contain a rich mixture of native wildflowers and shrubs. Burnett Woods has been dedicated as an Indiana State Nature Preserve and has a marked nature trail available for passive recreation.

### **Programming for kids and/or adults**

Consistent programs are offered by

- Brownsburg Parks and Recreation
- Danville Parks and Recreation
- Plainfield Parks and Recreation
- Washington Township Parks
- All area schools

### **Community Gardens**

- The Community Gardens of Danville
- South Elementary School – Town of Danville
- Plainfield Community Garden
- Center Community Church – Town of Plainfield
- Connection Pointe Community Garden
- Brownsburg Christian Church- Community Vegetable Garden
- Friendship Gardens- Plainfield Parks & Recreation

### **Indianapolis MPO/Regional**

(This non-comprehensive list is based on public participation comments)

- Eagle Creek Park (Indianapolis)
- Monon Trail and Greenway (Indianapolis)
- West Park (Carmel)
- State Parks, particularly: Turkey Run, Shades, McCormicks Creek for camping, hiking, water activities, natural beauty
- IMA and ArtsPark (Indianapolis)
- The Canal (Indianapolis)
- Holiday World

# Hendricks County Planning Documents



The preparation of the HCPR Master Plan included a review of planning documents that discuss Hendricks County or specific communities within the county. The intent of this review was to identify issues or needs that had been identified previously, to conduct a thorough inventory and analysis of the county, to assess park and recreation systems in incorporated areas of the county, and to determine if proposed HCPR Master Plan recommendations fit recommendations made in other planning studies.

The county documents\* reviewed and pertinent findings include:

## 2006-2010 Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Master Plan

In 2006, HCPR issued its second five-year parks and recreation master plan. As part of that planning process, the board maintained the following Mission Statement:

*'To provide and protect outstanding natural, historic, education and recreation areas to serve Hendricks County residents and visitors.'*

As well, the plan outlined park board goals, which have been used to direct activities, spending and operations of the park system. The board's goals were to:

- Maintain regular presence with County Boards
- Create more visibility for county park system
- Achieve and maintain adequate staffing levels
- Encourage training and education for board members and staff
- Acquire more land for parks
- Develop a policy manual for the parks department
- Establish new and maintain existing relationships in parks and recreation field
- Create a marketing momentum for parks
- Continue to enhance and expand McCloud Nature Park

The board used these goals to establish Master Plan action items that expand upon and give specific focus to the goals. These are contained in the 2006 - 2010 Master Plan Action Item Completion Table. Some of the action items were one-time tasks that have been completed, others are ongoing items that may be included in the current master plan documents.

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*\*Plainfield does not have Parks and Recreation Board in place, and has not produced a Parks and Recreation master plan.*

A few items have not yet been completed or are currently underway.

## 2010 Avon Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

The master plan focuses on bicycle and pedestrian movement and the reduction of potential conflicts among transportation modes, including vehicles, within Washington Township.

- The plan proposed a connected system of 100 miles of multi-use paths along major transportation thoroughfares, utility corridors, and natural features.
- The plan recommends that coordination and management of the trail network be the responsibility of the town's Public Works Department, with assistance from the Planning Department.
- Other plan recommendations include:
  - Link all schools, parks, libraries and community centers with bicycle/trail facilities.
  - Install multi-use paths along all primary roads.
  - Connect Avon/Washington Township to neighboring communities and systems in Hendricks County and adjacent counties.

## 2008 - 2012 Brownsburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan

According to the master plan, the two major challenges facing the Brownsburg Parks Department are funding and land acquisition for future or expanded parks. The shortage of funding impacts operations as well as the ability to purchase land. Land acquisition is also hampered by rapid community growth which makes finding large tracts of land suitable for park development a challenge and increases land prices.

Parks and Recreation amenity and programming needs identified in the plan include:

- Land for future parks, particularly on the north side of the community
- Community Center
- Aquatic Center and outdoor pool
- Recreation fields, particularly soccer and ball diamonds
- Programming for all ages
- Trails
- Winter programs
- Nature areas and preservation of open space
- Connectivity between parks and other amenities

In addition, the town conducted a community survey in April 2010. Surveys were mailed to a random sample of 1,600 households throughout the Browns-



burg area and 453 surveys were completed. The results of the random sample of 453 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-4.6%. Key findings of the survey follow:

When asked about the need for recreation facilities, the top five responses were:

- Walking and biking trails (76%)
- Nature Center and trails (62%)
- Large community parks (58%)
- Swimming pools/water parks (56%)
- Small neighborhood parks (51%)

When asked about the need for sports and recreation programs the top five responses were:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (48%)
- Nature programs and exhibits (38%)
- Community special events (37%)
- Water fitness programs (34%)
- Youth Learn to Swim programs (33%)

### **2005-2009 Danville Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The Town of Danville operates a park system that includes two community parks and the Twin Bridges Recreational Area operated in conjunction with the Twin Bridge Recycling Disposal Facility. Key findings of their master plan include:

- At the time of the master plan, 13.8% of Danville's population was over the age of 65, significantly higher than the county percentage of 9.8%.
- Action item plans included:
  - Provide programming for all ages, and integrate programming for those with disabilities
  - Expand the trail system and develop trail master plan
  - Continue/expand partnerships for programming and services
  - Expand existing parks if opportunities are available

### **2004-2009 Pittsboro Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The Town of Pittsboro operates a park system that includes three community parks. Key findings of their master plan include:

- At the time the master plan was compiled, the town had experienced a growth rate of 95% since 1990.
- The plan recommended that the community develop partnerships with other groups to provide recreation amenities/programs.

- Key community needs/desires were:
  - Walking trails to connect parks and neighborhoods
  - Recreational programming for all ages
  - Community swimming pool
  - Gathering place for teens
  - Possible trail connections to Brownsburg via an interurban corridor, or the B&O Trail are recommended.

### **2001 - 2005 Avon Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The Town of Avon is in the process of updating its Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2010. The prior master plan identified six items of greatest interest to the community at that time.

- Walking, jogging and hiking trails.
- Swimming lake or pool
- Picnicking
- Playgrounds
- Court sports
- Community Center
- Amphitheater

### **2008 Hendricks County Assessment Report and Findings**

In June and in September of 2008, a Community Assessment of Hendricks County, Indiana, was conducted by Destination Development International. The intent of the assessment was to provide an unbiased overview of the community – how it is seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public restrooms, overall appeal, and the community's ability to attract overnight visitors.

As part of the assessment, the Vandalia Trail trailheads located in Coatesville and Amo were reviewed. The following comments were made:

- This is a great trail between the towns but the trailheads need cleaning up.
- This trail is well worth the development and maintenance effort and is a great asset for the two communities. Keep it maintained and enhance it as well, perhaps with benches along the route, effective, professional signage, and maybe a trail map posted in various locations, and in a brochure available at the trailheads.



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can  
change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”**  
**Margaret Mead**

# Stakeholder Meetings



*Master Plan Steering Committee Discussion*

## Methodology

A series of stakeholder meetings were held on July 13, 14 and 27, 2010, at the Hendricks County Government Center in Danville. The project team worked closely with the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department and the Master Plan Steering Committee to identify key stakeholders. A total of fifty-five stakeholders were interviewed in groups ranging from two to six people.

Groups Represented included:

- Planning
- Economic Development
- Hendricks County Park Board
- Hendricks County Park Foundation
- Park Volunteers and advocates
- Religious Community
- County Government (Council and Commission)
- Tourism
- Chamber of Commerce
- School Systems
- Health Community/Hospital
- Central Indiana Land Trust
- Town Government
- Master Plan Steering Committee
- Historian
- Visitors Bureau
- Small Business
- Local Parks Representatives
- Services Provider for those with Disabilities
- Families with young, teenage, and adult children
- Singles
- Seniors

An interview guide was created by the team and served as the agenda for all stakeholder meetings to ensure consistency of questioning. All responses were recorded and analyzed using qualitative data analysis.

## Core Themes

Five core themes emerged from the stakeholder meetings. These themes were widely agreed upon by participants and represent important considerations for HCPR in meeting the desires and needs of the county. The validity of these themes was further explored in the Community Survey. In addition to the core themes, several recreation/amenity needs were identified as important to stakeholders. Some of these directly relate to the core themes.

### Theme: Nature-Based Recreation

*Desire for nature-based recreation focus by HCPR.*

Stakeholders commented that the local community park systems are generally focused on providing active and sports-oriented recreation. Overall, they agree that this is an appropriate focus for those systems.

Rather than duplicating this focus, they see the role of HCPR as oriented to larger-scale, nature-oriented recreation. Stakeholders feel that this is a recreation need in the county. They see the HCPR system as better able to fill this need, in part because larger tracts of land are generally located in unincorporated areas. Stakeholders had many positive comments about the nature-oriented recreation available at McCloud and (in the future) Sodalis Nature Parks.

### Theme: Conservation of Open Space and Land Banking

*The need to acquire additional park land, particularly land that supports nature-based recreation and/or county identity.*

Stakeholders recognize how quickly the county is growing, and there is consensus that a greater priority be given to acquiring land, if appropriate tracts become available, rather than developing new park amenities. A typical comment was 'Get the land now, while it is available, and then develop it in the future as funds become available.'

There is also desire for the natural amenities, character and history of the county be preserved. Acquiring land for future park development that protects/preserves these characteristics is preferred.





### **Theme: Connectivity**

*Desire for a county-wide trail system that connects towns, parks and existing/proposed trail systems, and the consensus that HCPR has a role to play in the trail system.*

Stakeholders see great benefit in providing a connected trail system that links parks, communities, amenities, and sites of interest within the county. As well, they want to see these connections extend to other surrounding counties. Some of the benefits cited include: improved health, spur economic development, improve access to recreation amenities throughout the county, attract young professionals and families, and increased recreation opportunities.

Stakeholders agree that HCPR has an important role to play in the countywide trail system. More than once it was stated "If you (HCPR) don't take a leadership role, who will?" However, stakeholders varied widely when it came to what HCPR's role should be. Most agreed that the HCPR should bring a "big picture" perspective by focusing on a county-wide trail system. Beyond that, stakeholders were fairly evenly divided between the role being (in unincorporated areas):

- A promoter and facilitator of trail development
- A developer and owner of trails
- A manager of trails once they are built

### **Theme: County Leadership**

*The desire for HCPR to take a leadership role in coordinating and planning for county-wide recreation amenities, programs and trails.*

Stakeholders believe HCPR also has a leadership role to play in coordinating county-wide recreation efforts. There is not a call for HCPR to manage and/or direct other park systems, but rather to have a broad

perspective of the county's recreation offerings, to compile this information and to make it available in order to:

- Increase knowledge of county-wide parks and events
- Piggyback events
- Reduce unneeded duplication of programs/amenities
- Provide a comprehensive resource to citizens

### **Theme: Programming**

*The current programming by HCPR is valued by stakeholders, and there is support to see this programming continue and expand.*

The area of programming most frequently mentioned as a need was educational programming, which could encompass historical, nature, and outdoor skills/activities.

### **Hendricks County Needs**

During the stakeholder meetings, participants identified several specific recreation needs for the county. Some of these relate directly to the core themes that were identified

- *Connectivity (trails)*
- Nature and Open Space Conservation
- Promoting Sense of Place by celebrating and preserving the history and character of the county.

To a lesser extent the following needs were cited:

- Camping
- A facility for large events such as a large shelter, pavilion or gazebo.
- Accessible amenities for those with disabilities.
- A community garden.

(A synopsis of stakeholder comments follows)



# Stakeholder Comments



## County Observations

- Can do attitude, lots of heart
- “Homey”
- Stays true to its roots and values
- Affordable, hometown suburban county
- Several major transportation arteries in County
- County is split: East side is urban, west side is rural. Generally, this split is seen as a positive.

## Park Use Within County (Those parks/amenities other than HCPR amenities seen as most popular)

- Plainfield Trails – because it connects amenities and parks
- Splash Island
- Plainfield Parks
- Washington Township Park
- Ellis Park – trails and playground
- Avon Town Hall Park
- Williams Park
- Public and private sports facilities (Baseball, softball and soccer)
- Hendricks County Fairgrounds

## Park Use Outside of County (Those parks/amenities seen as popular)

- Eagle Creek Park (Indianapolis)
- State Parks, particularly: Turkey Run, Shades, McCormicks Creek for camping, hiking, water activities, natural beauty
- Monon Trail (Indianapolis)
- IMA and ArtsPark (Indianapolis)
- The Canal (Indianapolis)
- Holiday World

## McCloud Nature Park

- A county gem – the topography, natural setting, nature programming, bridge and trails are key attributes.
- Park is different from other parks in county – it fills a need for a more nature-oriented park
- Big Walnut Creek also a big attraction: Families come to “creek-stomp,” fish, and interact with water.
- Canoeing is limited due to water levels most of the year.
- Not currently well known, but becoming more so.
- Perception is that it's hard to get to, but easier than people think
- Not at all accessible to those with mobility impairments – the dirt trails are great, but some accessible, paved trails are needed for those

with disabilities. Also, accessible paved parking at the nature center (not gravel).

- Need larger indoor space for large school groups, particularly in inclement weather. (Larger groups have to cancel if it rains.)

## Other HCPR Amenities/Programming

- Fun Run is seen as very successful. Promotes health and wellness, all ages and fitness levels can participate, promotes wider knowledge of county/park systems as events are held at a variety of locations.
- Sodalis is seen as a facility with high potential. Fishing and interaction with nature are anticipated to be popular activities.

## Parks and Recreation Needs within County

- Trail system to connect communities and parks, link to established trails
- An overall compilation of parks and recreation amenities within the county, including trails
- Parks that are nature-oriented
- Places for group gatherings, particularly mid-size groups of 30-50
- Camping – Fairgrounds only place that offers for 30 days/year (others felt camping was not something county should provide)
- Protect history
- Teach people to swim
- Community garden

## Underserved Populations/Areas

- Older teens: need something to challenge and entertain them
- The disabled (accessible facilities)
- Overall focus on providing services/amenities for kids and families (even by senior stakeholders)
- Southwest corner of county
- Northeast corner of county (Brownsburg area and vicinity)

## Role of HCPR

- Provide big picture view of county parks and recreation and how various systems fit together
- Provide opportunities to interact with nature and nature programming
- Coordinator/Facilitator/Leader of efforts between communities (trails, amenities, sharing of resources)
- Education – nature, history, preservation, green building; provide both in parks and at schools/libraries throughout county
- Large scale, more natural parks



- Forecast how county will grow and identify recreation needs
- Trails – county definitely has a role,
- Respondents differ over appropriate level of commitment, including:
  - Create
  - Maintain existing if “owner” cannot
  - Facilitate
  - Identify links.
- Concerns that heavy involvement in constructing/operating/maintaining trails would take too many resources.
- Provide examples and education for green development and Best Management Practices
- Organized sports (baseball, softball and soccer) not the focus
- City parks: more active recreation, sports, playgrounds. County parks: more passive recreation, nature-oriented.
- Provide county parks that are more like a state park, place to interact with nature
- Facilitate conservation easements within county.

### Opportunities

- I-70 and U.S. 39 Interchange: poised for growth, no development there now, need amenities (including parks) to attract businesses and workers
- I-74, Pittsboro/Lizton – possible growth area
- An engaged community with a can-do spirit
- Volunteers to help clean and maintain parks
- Preservation of Open Space – an opportunity that may be gone in the future, do it now while the land is available
- Bat mitigation – total area is 1000's of acres
- Identify land that connects parks, particularly along waterways

### Challenges

- Funding –County budgets continue to decline, finding new sources of funding important, examples discussed include impact fees, user fees, renting facilities for overnight
- Staffing – increasing amenities and programming is limited by number of HCPR staff
- Quality of Life – have made progress but need to continue to improve

### General Needs and Observations

- Younger families of today are more demanding when it comes to services: want them connected and close to where they work/live. Amenities and services that make their lives easier are key to attracting this demographic.
- Generally, purchasing and banking land now if it

becomes available is well supported, and a higher priority than developing new parks. However, striking a balance between acquisition and development is necessary so that opening up new park lands and amenities also occurs.

- Security – people need to feel safe in parks and on trails: safe from troublemakers, separation of bikers and pedestrians
- Parks contribute much to quality of life and are important in attracting families and new development.
- If state eliminates townships, HCPR may need to help with three township parks

### Park Staff Comments

- Ability to maintain parks and programs at same level as Sodalís Nature Park comes on board will be challenging without more staff and/or resources
- County park system is currently more nature-oriented than recreation-oriented. This is as it should be. However, could add additional amenities to interest wider audience of visitors: playground, adventure recreation, skills courses
- Some park amenities (examples, aquatic centers, skate park) would require too much capital for HCPR. Others provide those types of services.
- Trash and vandalism not a problem at McCloud Nature Park, do not even close gate at night. Sodalís Nature Park may attract more problems given proximity to Indianapolis. Already experience trash dumping along road, people speed along road.
- Logistics of maintaining two parks will be challenging as they are 40 minutes apart.
- Other organizations not willing to share equipment.
- Park system has philosophy of working within budget, and “Do it right, do it once.”
- W. S. Gibbs property could provide a central location for equipment to reduce travel time and logistics.
- Can't build programs around volunteers – some are great, others do not follow through
- Adequate staffing was generally seen as the most pressing concern in providing park maintenance and programming, followed by equipment needs. Observation that if more people are added, more equipment may also be needed.
- HCPR functions under county policies which sometimes complicates operations.

# Public Meeting



## Public Meeting Results

Two public meetings were held early in the planning process to offer Hendricks County residents the opportunity to share their thoughts, desires and concerns regarding HCPR and their county-wide parks and recreation amenities. The first public meeting was held at the Hendricks County Government Center in Danville on the evening of August 12, 2010. The second was held at the Plainfield Public Library on August 17, 2010.

In total, 19 members of the public attended one of the two public meetings. Also attending were representatives of the project team (Rundell Ernstberger Associates and the Eppley Institute) and HCPR.



*Residents Gather for Public Meeting*

Participants were given a brief introduction to the master planning process and the HCPR system, followed by an open discussion led by the project team. In addition to taking general comments made spontaneously by the audience, the project team also requested feedback on particular topics, including:

- The relationship of HCPR to other park systems located within Hendricks County
- The role of HCPR in Trail and Greenway development, ownership, and maintenance
- The appropriate balance of acquiring new park land versus developing park amenities
- The types and locations of recreation amenities desired

Verbal comments were recorded by the project team, and the following three themes identified. These themes correspond to those that resulted from the stakeholder meetings:

### **Theme: Conservation of Open Space and Land Banking.**

Due to the rapid growth of the county, acquiring additional park land is generally seen as a greater priority than developing new recreation amenities.

### **Theme: Nature-Based Recreation**

There was a widely acknowledged desire among participants for HCPR to provide nature-based recreation and parks rather than duplicate programs and amenities offered by other park systems within the county.

### **Theme: Connectivity**

Participants indicated that trails to connect county communities and other trail systems are desired, as well as trail connections to places outside of the community, such as Eagle Creek Park in Marion County. Participants also mentioned the desire for trail corridors that run north and south through the county as well as those that traverse the county from east to west (as do the proposed Vandalia and B&O Trails).

There is a desire for HCPR to be involved in some capacity with trails in Hendricks County, although the level of involvement desired varied among those who commented.

# Final Plan Review and Comment



Public review and comment of the final plan was conducted in February, 2011.

The final draft Master Plan was made available at each public library in Hendricks County from February 11 through February 25, 2011. Although members of the public reviewed the draft master plan at the libraries, no comments were received as a result of their review.

The final draft Master Plan document was also placed on the HCPR website as a PDF document available for download. The website document was viewed by 75 unique visitors. Again, no comments were received.

Finally, a public meeting was held on February 17, 2011 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the Hendricks County Government Center in Danville, Indiana.

In addition to three members of the master plan team, seven people attended the public meeting. They included:

- Three Hendricks County residents
- Two HCPR board members
- One Hendricks County Council member
- One member of the press

The meeting was held as an open house, with copies of the master plan available for review, and the planning team available for discussion and questions.

Attendees of the public meeting had the following comments regarding the master plan and the park system.

## McCloud Nature Park

- Canoeing through the park is a favorite activity (of one attendee). Water levels in Big Walnut Creek generally limit this activity to late spring/early summer.
- One attendee would prefer that camping not be added to McCloud Nature Park as it might detract from the natural character of the park.
- An attendee requested that open areas for play and picnicking be maintained as part of the park amenities.
- An attendee suggested a playground with a nature or education theme be added to the park to provide a fun activity for children.
- "When adding new amenities, it is important to keep the integrity of the nature park."

- A larger/more prominent sign on US 36 and SR 75 was suggested to better promote the location of the park.

## Miscellaneous Comments

- (One attendee is) not an environmentalist, but likes outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing. "If natural areas are not kept, we lose something."
- The Adrian Parsons Farmstead in Avon was suggested as an opportunity for a park location with historic significance. The Parsons family was important in establishment of soybean production in Indiana.
- (One attendee) supports user fees because "people should pay their way." This attendee also has "no problem with impact fees."
- Flying model airplanes is a pastime of one attendee who commented that a model airplane park could be created with a few acres of land that is fairly open, and somewhat remote (to minimize the impact of airplane noise).
- An attendee asked if any plans had been made for recreation amenities along White Lick Creek. The team shared that while no amenities have been specifically proposed along White Lick Creek as part of this master plan, the plan's land acquisition recommendations identify county water corridors as a priority.

Notification of the public meeting and public review period was conducted through advertisements and articles in local media, postings on the HCPR Facebook page, and on the HCPR website. (See Appendix A for documentation of the notification and public meeting attendance.)



# Public Meeting Comments



**August 12, 2010**

**Hendricks County Government Center, Danville**

Start: 6:04pm

Attendees: William Roche, Cheryl Chalfant, Jeff Bransford, 11 public

Notes:

**Question: How is HCP&R working with towns?**

William: Coordinating programs, development. Some utilization of McCloud.

**Question: Are you coordinating trail development?**

William: Historically, yes, and continue to. Staying abreast of trail, park & rec, open space planning. Using trail plan created by MPO to the extent possible, but much isn't usable.

**Question: Are other towns being included in this planning process?**

William: Yes, they are at the table.

Cheryl: We are referring to other plans, and inviting them to participate in stakeholder meetings

**Statement: We should connect every town via trails and greenways. And county should pay attention to growth and needs.**

William: The 2006 Comprehensive Master Plan for the county adopted the trail plan, but question is how to implement with scarce resources, and how to prioritize.

**Question: Has the mission of the department been revised?**

Cheryl: It's under review; we're working with the Board. Should the mission change?

Response: yes, to reflect nature preservation more.

**Question: You say the population was 140K, but I thought it was more. Is it really?**

William: 140K confirmed. There are other figures around that project beyond 2011.

**Statement: A (political) champion is needed to make the I-70/Hwy 39 gateway more of a gateway.**

**Question from Cheryl: What should the balance be between acquiring and developing?**

Isn't that hard to predict because acquisition is random/unplanned?

William: Still need to plan/prioritize for funding and the possibility for acquisition opportunities that may arise.

Additional comments from attendees following William Roche's response to the questions:

- Acquire before it's too late – especially for connectivity. Acquire trails, waterways to connect places within and between counties.
- Get it when you can, develop later when you can. Both residential and industrial is claiming land quickly. County funding / tax base will likely not be available.
- Need to explore alternative methods of acquiring land and funding. Using the Foundation is one option, but it's still small. Maybe explore other innovative ways like sponsorships and donations, especially with local industries.

**Statement: The county park board has the responsibility to consider/approve connections with other counties, so we should remember this as we plan to acquire.**

**Statement: There's a desire of many residents living near Eagle Creek to connect safely into Hendricks County, and not just on roads. Ultimately we should connect Eagle Creek trails to the B&O and the Vandalia.**

**Statement: Hiking opportunities are in demand, especially ones that are diverse – not just flat and open. We should target waterways like White Lick Creek. There should be north/south trails, not just east/west.**

**Statement: Remember to provide for equestrians. Vandalia is equestrian.**

Attendee Question: Are there equestrian facilities near Vandalia?

Attendee Response: Closest is halfway to Clayton.

**Question: Are there any inter-urban corridors left to develop?**

Cheryl: Possibly in Pittsboro; according to their master plan.

Maybe one associated with White Lick Creek.

End: 6:48pm



**August 17, 2010**  
**Plainfield Public Library**

Start: 6:05 p.m.

Attendees: William Roche, Cheryl Chalfant, Steve Wolter, 8 members of the public

Notes:

**Question: Why a push for Sodalis Nature Park as a nature park?**

Quiet nature park focus is required. Park is part of Indiana Bat habitat. Fish and Wildlife and Airport Authority are partners.

**Question: Will all trails at Sodalis be accessible?**

Some will be accessible.

**Statement: Security of each county park is important.**

**Statement: Use money to acquire land rather than develop (agreed upon consensus)**

**Discussion: Role of HCPR in providing/maintaining trails in Hendricks County**

- Connect recreational facilities and nature use areas
- Connect existing trails in communities
- HCPR should be involved with trail development in county
- Use existing rail corridors where possible
- State trails will be more arterial – provide connections to the county's trail system.

**Statement: There is a greater priority on acquisition of park land rather than the development of park amenities**

**Statement: HCPR role (consensus) is to be more involved in nature-based recreation**

**Statement: Reuse land already in public property for recreation where feasible.**

**Discussion: Role of Hendricks County Parks with other county park systems**

- Help to develop parks in Plainfield from Indiana state corrections property
- The park board is concerned that elimination of townships would cause some recreation resources to be lost, but the board has not established a priority of managing these facilities if a town

does not have the ability to do so.

- Use local parks for active recreation and county parks for nature-oriented recreation.

**Question: Will budget projections be made in the 5-year plan?**

Yes. Strategic fundraising was and is the county parks department approach for raising additional funds. Bonding is not being considered.

**Statement: Innovative partnering is desirable.**

**Statement: Focus on buying land now**

**Statement: Need to provide quiet places for nature recreation. Some activities, such as bird watching, require quiet, and this is difficult to find.**

**Statement: Impressive volunteerism here in the county so get some assistance**

**Statement. Blue way discussion – during times of higher water levels in Big Walnut Creek set up canoe shuttles and use proceeds as a fund raiser for a land acquisition fund.**

Meeting ended 7:03 p.m.





## Summary

The demographics information from the Random Survey Sample indicates a representative sample of respondents compared to overall Hendricks County population and population distribution. Although the response rate is 2.7%, it is in concordance with other mail survey response rates. The number of responding households (372) represents a 5.07 confidence interval at a 95% confidence level. The resulting conclusion is that the final response rate and confidence interval is adequate at a 95% confidence level to allow generalizations about the entire Hendricks County population.

Approximately the same numbers of respondents reported visiting/attending a HCPR park or program at both a relatively low frequency (a few times a year) and a relatively high frequency (a few times a month or a few times a week) over the past year. Generally, among the random sample participants, Hendricks County park facilities are frequented by almost 80% of the respondents. Respondents also visit facilities run by other local parks and recreation departments, but generally less often than Hendricks County parks facilities (with the exception of Indiana State Park facilities.) Importantly, some respondents indicated not being aware of HCPR; this finding was echoed in several responses throughout the questionnaire, particularly in the open-ended essay questions. Moreover, more respondents indicated not knowing about HCPR than the other nine parks and recreation agencies listed in the questionnaire.

Although a high percentage of respondents reported visiting/attending a HCPR facility in the past year, only 27% of respondents reported having visited McCloud Nature Park within the past year. Of those who visited McCloud Nature Park in the past year, high satisfaction levels were reported for all amenities at the park; on average almost 80% of respondents reported being 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied. Also among the self-selecting respondents who reported being more frequent users of HCPR facilities and programs, almost 84% reported being 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied.

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated perceiving that a family aquatics/water park was most important to Hendricks County as a facility that a parks and recreation department may provide. Respondents indicated that they felt funding increasing demand for parks and recreation facilities and services be pursued by developing facilities that can generate revenue. Correspondingly, respondents indicated that

costs should be covered by user fees for specific-use facilities such as swimming pools and campgrounds.

Nature and connector trails were designated as being the most important facility/service that a parks and recreation department may provide to individuals responding to the survey. If respondents had additional funding to devote to parks and recreation facilities, they indicated that after maintaining current facilities, 'trails' was the first category for investment of additional funding.

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they perceived that parks and recreation facilities and programs provide an enhanced quality of life and indicated that they felt no fee should be charged for facilities and services perceived as providing a broader public service such as parks and education programs.

## Survey Methodology

### Random Sample

Two rounds of survey invitations were mailed from a random population of Hendricks County households. The first round of 4,000 invitations yielded 161 responses or a response rate of 4.025% and the second round of 10,000 invitations yielded 211 responses for a total of 372 responding households from both rounds and a total response rate of 2.7%.

The first round was mailed on July 7, 2010; the second round was mailed on October 8, 2010. The survey closed October 27, 2010. For each round of surveys, an initial postcard was mailed to each household including a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) allowing respondents to complete the survey online or alternative instructions for receiving a paper copy. A unique respondent key code was included on each invitation and respondents were prompted to enter the key code in the questionnaire. The key code ensures that each response is unique.

Both rounds used the Dillman Tailored Design Method (Dillman, Mail and Internet Surveys, 1974) which consists of following the original survey mailing with a series of postcard reminders. This survey included follow-up postcard reminders 7 and 14 days after the initial survey invitation mailing.

Dillman suggests that high nonresponse rates to any mailing are inevitable but are likely not due to conscious refusal but rather result from the respondents' practical hierarchy of priorities. (Dillman, Mail and Internet Surveys; The Tailored Design Method, Second



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Edition, 2007, p.179).

With a population of 56,012 households and a 95% confidence level, a sample size of 372 households indicates a confidence interval of 5.1. At a 90% confidence level, the sample size reflects a confidence interval of 4.3.

### **Nonrandom Sample**

During the survey period, Hendricks County Parks and Recreation also distributed a survey link and paper copies at public events allowing other residents to complete the survey. These respondents did not have a unique key code. Responses were then able to be differentiated in the following survey analysis. The nonrandom respondent group consisted of 131 respondents.

A further analysis of comparison of random sample results with nonrandom sample responses follows the random sample reporting and analysis section.



## Random Sample Final Results

The following section reports on each of the 14 items in the questionnaire. Each item is reported and analyzed with a final summary analysis at the end of this section.

### Q1. Were you provided an access code for this survey?

Random sample responses were received from 372 households who entered a unique key code. Respondents were asked if they were provided an access code for the survey. If a respondent answered "yes," they were then prompted with an entry box asking them to enter the code. If respondents answered "no," they then proceeded to Q2 and began the survey. The codification of surveys allowed for the separation of the random sample and nonrandom sample responses. The following results report on the random sample survey of 372 households who entered a qualifying access code.

### Q2. The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department (HCPR) serves all communities and townships within Hendricks County. In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a park run by HCPR or attended a program hosted by HCPR?

Approximately the same number of respondents reported visiting/attending a HCPR park or program at both a relatively low frequency (a few times a year) and a relatively high frequency (a few times a month or a few times a week) over the past year.

<b>FIGURE M. HCPR Department Park and Program Visitation/Attendance</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
A few times a year	144	39%
A few times a month	99	27%
I was not aware there was a Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department; or I'm not sure if it was a HCPR event.	54	15%
A few times a week	35	10%
Never	26	7%
Daily	8	2%
n=366		

- The majority of household respondents (39%, or 144, respondents) indicated that they visited a HCPR park or HCPR-sponsored event a few times a year.
  - 27% (99 respondent households) indicated that they visited a HCPR park or HCPR-sponsored event a few times a month
  - 10% (35 respondents) indicated they visited a few times a week.
  - Only 7% (26 respondents) stated that they never visit a HCPR park or event.
  - 15% (54 respondents) stated that they were either not aware there was a Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department or they were not sure if the event they attended was a HCPR event.
- (In comparison, it is important to note that approximately 78% of random sample respondents visited a HCPR facility or attended an HCPR event.)

### Q3. Several other parks and recreation departments in and around Hendricks County are listed below. For each, please indicate how often you have visited a park or attended a program run by them in the last 12 months.

Results of this question show that more respondents visited Indiana State Parks (n=268) and Plainfield Parks and Recreation (n=239) facilities or programs compared to any other agency, with the exception of HCPR. Question 2 showed that HCPR sites and programs attracted more respondents (n=286) than any listed here. This may be unsurprising on the surface, but considering the complexity and reputation of some of the systems included in this question, HCPR's attendance is noteworthy.



<b>FIGURE N. Other Park and Recreation Agency Visitation/Attendance</b>							
<b>Item</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>A few times per week</b>	<b>A few times a month</b>	<b>A few times a year</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Don't know/ Wasn't aware of department</b>	<b>Total</b>
Avon Parks & Recreation	1% 3	4% 14	8% 27	42% 140	41% 135	4% 14	333
Brownsburg Parks & Recreation	0% 0	5% 16	11% 37	35% 119	46% 155	3% 10	337
Washington Township Parks & Recreation	0% 0	2% 8	10% 32	38% 122	42% 137	7% 24	323
Guilford Township Parks & Recreation	2% 6	5% 16	9% 30	21% 70	50% 163	13% 41	326
Pittsboro Parks & Recreation	0% 0	0% 0	2% 5	11% 35	77% 236	10% 32	308
Danville Parks & Recreation	1% 3	2% 6	7% 23	42% 137	46% 149	2% 8	326
Plainfield Parks & Recreation	3% 11	10% 33	15% 52	41% 143	28% 96	3% 10	345
Indy Parks	0% 1	2% 5	4% 14	43% 139	48% 155	3% 10	324
Indiana State Parks	0% 0	0% 1	7% 23	72% 244	19% 65	2% 7	340
Average %	0.8%	3.3%	8.2%	38.8%	43.6%	5.3%	
n=366							

When asked to indicate park visitation or program attendance run by other parks and recreation departments around Hendricks County, the majority of respondents indicated that they visited the parks and recreation departments listed either a few times a year or never. Most respondents (72%, or 244) indicated that they visit Indiana State Parks a few times a year. Conversely, only 19% (65 respondents) indicated they never visit Indiana State Parks.

Between 41% and 35% of respondents indicated that they visit or attend the following parks and recreation systems a few times a year: Indy Parks (43%), Avon Parks and Recreation (42%), Danville Parks and Recreation (42%), Plainfield (41%), Washington Township Parks and Recreation (38%), Brownsburg Parks and Recreation (35%).

A majority of respondents indicated that they never visit parks or attend programs run by the following agencies: Brownsburg Parks and Recreation (46%), Washington Township Parks and Recreation (42%), Guilford Township Parks and Recreation (50%), Danville Parks and Recreation (46%), Indy Parks (48%).

The park system receiving the most number of daily visits from respondents was Plainfield Parks and Recreation (3% or 11). Of all systems, Pittsboro Parks and Recreation received the most number of participants indicating they never visit facilities or attend events (77% or 236)."

As expected, the park systems that showed the most visitation on a recurring basis were associated with the most populated communities in the county.



**Q4. Below is a list of facilities and services that a parks and recreation department may provide. Consider the five (5) that you think are most important to the community of Hendricks County and rank them in order of importance, with '1' being most important and '5' being 5th most important. Then consider the five (5) that are most important to you personally and rank them in order of importance, as well. Please choose exactly five (5) items for Important to Community and exactly five (5) for Important to Me. Leave all other fields blank.**

The largest number of respondents indicated that they felt a family aquatics/water park was the most important facility/service to Hendricks County and that trails, both nature and connector trails, were the most important facility/service to themselves.

<b>FIGURE O. Facilities/services important to community, important to me</b>												
	Important to Community						Important to Me					
	1	2	3	4	5	[blank]	1	2	3	4	5	[blank]
Family aquatics/water park	75	43	37	30	35	26	43	24	31	25	32	87
Additional land set aside for recreation	39	26	15	20	29	29	21	23	23	30	28	33
Additional land set aside for environmental protection	37	19	16	11	25	36	40	19	21	12	19	34
Additional nature centers and visitor centers	11	13	11	15	11	29	11	12	17	15	12	23
Programs and events about local history and culture	11	8	12	14	14	18	12	9	16	12	11	17
Programs and events about nature and science	8	19	17	15	17	27	8	15	13	20	18	29
Programs and events about health and wellness	23	7	16	15	15	22	12	13	14	12	14	32
Additional trails (nature)	30	30	41	30	24	69	55	49	39	38	20	24
Additional trails (linking community resources)	36	26	27	28	22	41	48	35	23	23	27	24
Indoor event/meeting space for rent	7	13	9	11	20	14	6	7	7	11	17	26
Outdoor event/meeting space for rent	8	8	12	14	15	20	6	8	11	9	19	24
Camping	6	6	12	9	14	30	11	9	14	9	16	15
Programs and events for children	46	38	34	25	26	17	20	25	23	17	18	83
Programs and events for teens	16	18	21	21	10	4	5	4	6	11	9	54
Programs and events for adults	10	5	14	6	16	35	10	5	20	17	13	18
Programs and events for senior citizens	9	8	9	15	11	44	14	10	17	13	25	17
Outdoor athletic/sports fields	34	31	19	18	30	14	14	10	13	12	15	83
Fitness centers	27	16	16	21	30	45	36	25	27	21	31	15
Picnic areas	17	19	18	27	35	33	13	18	28	25	26	39
Fishing areas	10	3	8	11	18	27	19	10	11	10	12	14
n=368 Other responses mentioned by more than three respondents included: bike trails (13), dog park (6), and disc golf (4).												





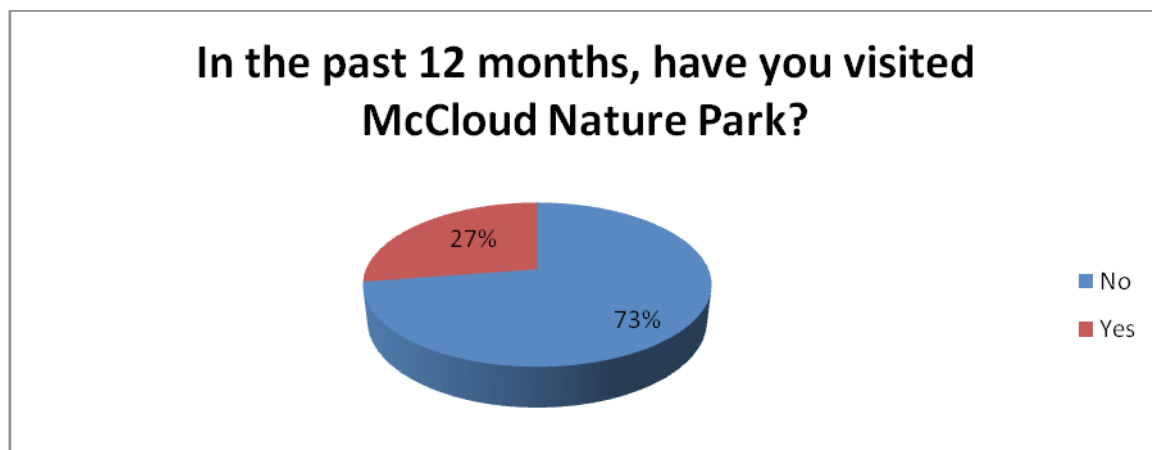
### Important to community

When respondents were asked to consider and rank the 5 most important facilities/services that a parks and recreation department may provide, respondents ranked a **family aquatics/water park** as being the most important for the community of Hendricks County. Respondents also tended to rank **programs and events for children**, **additional land set aside for both recreation and environmental protection** and **trails** (nature and linking community resources) as most important to the community. Respondents ranked the following facilities and services as most important for the community in terms of most responses from 1-3: **family aquatics/water park** (153 responses), **programs for children** (118 responses), **additional trails (nature)** (101), **additional trails (linking community resources)** (89), **additional land set aside for recreation** (80), **additional land set aside for environmental protection** (72).

### Important to me

When respondents were asked to consider which facilities/services were important to them ('Important to Me'), the range of responses varied from what respondents indicated was important to the community. The largest number of respondents indicated that **additional trails both nature trails and those linking community resources** were the most important facility/service to them. Respondents ranked the following facilities and services as 'Important to me' in terms of most responses from 1-3: **additional Trails (nature)** (143 responses), **additional trails (linking community resources)** (106), **family aquatics/water park** (98 responses), **fitness centers** (88), **additional land set aside for environmental protection** (80), and **additional land set aside for recreation** (67).

**Q5. In the past 12 months, have you visited McCloud Nature Park (located near North Salem)?**  
**Over one fourth of respondents visited McCloud Nature Park in the past 12 months.**



n=368

**FIGURE P.     McCloud Park Visitation**

A majority of respondents (73%, or 267, respondents) indicated that they have not visited McCloud Nature Park in the past 12 months while 27% (101 respondents) indicated that they have visited McCloud Nature Park in the past year.



**Q6. Please indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following aspects of McCloud Nature Park. On average, almost 80% of respondents who have visited McCloud Nature Park in the past 12 months are 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with all amenities at the park.**

<b>FIGURE Q. Satisfaction levels of McCloud Nature Park</b>						
<b>Item</b>	Very satis- fied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissat- isfied	Don't know/N/A	Total
<b>Nature Center</b>	53.1% 52	27.6% 27	4.1% 4	2.0% 2	13.3% 13	98
<b>Picnic shelters/areas</b>	32.7% 32	39.8% 39	5.1% 5	2.0% 2	20.4% 20	98
<b>Trails</b>	49.5% 49	39.4% 39	2.0% 2	2.0% 2	7.1% 7	99
<b>Assistance from staff</b>	56.7% 55	15.5% 15	2.1% 2	2.1% 2	23.7% 23	97
<b>Programs/activities</b>	35.1% 34	15.5% 15	2.1% 2	3.1% 3	44.3% 43	97
<b>Overall experience</b>	64.3% 63	28.6% 28	3.1% 3	2.0% 2	2.0% 2	98
<b>Average %</b>	48.6%	27.8%	3.1%	2.2%	18.4%	
n=101						

If respondents indicated that they had visited McCloud Nature Park in the past year, they were then prompted with a question asking them to evaluate their satisfaction with the different amenities at McCloud Nature Park listed above. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that they are "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with all amenities listed at McCloud Nature Park. Respondents reported being very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the Nature Center (81%, or 79 responses), with the Picnic shelters/areas (72.5%, or 71 responses), Trails (88.9%, or 88 responses), Assistance from staff (72.2%, or 70 responses), Programs/activities (50.6%, or 49 responses), and Overall Experience (92.9%, or 91 responses).

Also, of note is that the majority of secondary responses did not indicate any level of dissatisfaction. After the 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' levels, respondents mostly indicated that they 'did not know or N/A' regarding an amenity. Between 2 and 5 respondents reported being "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with each amenity. The average response rates indicate that almost 50% of respondents are "very satisfied" with amenities, almost 30% are "somewhat satisfied", 18% indicated "don't know/N/A", 3% are "somewhat dissatisfied" and 2% are "very dissatisfied."

**Q7. Consider the following programs and services offered by some park and recreation agencies. In some cases such programs and services are provided for free (i.e., the cost is borne by the agency). In other cases, user fees are charged to cover or offset their cost. For each item below, please indicate if you believe they should be provided at the cost of the user, the agency, or shared between the two.**

Respondents reported feeling that user fees should be charged for specific-use facilities such as campgrounds and swimming pools and that no fee should be charged for facilities/services providing a broader public service such as parks or different types of education programs.



<b>FIGURE R. Programs and Services provided at the cost of the user, the agency, or shared</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>No fee charged (Agency covers cost)</b>	<b>Cost shared be- tween users and agency</b>	<b>User fee charged (Agency recovers cost)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Interpretation or education programs for the PUBLIC	56% 206	33% 123	11% 39	368
Education programs for SCHOOL GROUPS	59% 216	32% 118	9% 34	368
Education programs for SPECIAL GROUPS (e.g., scouts, civic organizations)	40% 148	47% 172	13% 47	367
Admission to a city or county park	69% 252	22% 81	9% 34	367
Admission to a nature center or museum	35% 128	43% 156	23% 83	367
Admission to a swimming pool	3% 12	37% 137	60% 219	368
Park shelter/ pavilion use	23% 84	38% 138	40% 146	368
Use of athletic equipment or sporting goods	5% 18	43% 159	52% 191	368
Athletic events (e.g., 5K fun run)	16% 58	45% 164	40% 145	367
Special events (e.g., festivals, fairs)	24% 88	39% 144	36% 133	365
Use of campground with facilities	2% 9	29% 108	68% 250	367
Use of campground without facilities	22% 79	41% 150	37% 137	366
Average %	29.5%	37.4%	33.1%	
n=368				

The average results favored cost sharing between the agency and the users (37%), followed by charging user fees in which the agency recovers the costs (33%). Approximately 30% of respondents indicated that user fees should not be charged.

Specifically, respondents felt the strongest about charging user fees for the use of a campground with facilities (68%), admission to a swimming pool (60%), use of athletic equipment or sporting goods (52%), and park/shelter pavilion use and athletic events (both 40%).

Conversely, respondents felt the strongest about providing free services, or services for which the agency covers costs, for admission to a city or county park (69%), education programs for school groups (59%), interpretation or education programs for the public (56%), and education programs for special groups such as scouts and civic organizations (40%).

Respondents felt most strongly that costs should be shared between users and agency regarding education programs for special groups such as scouts and civic organizations (47%), athletic events (45%), admission to a nature center or museum (43%), and use of athletic equipment or sporting goods (also 43%).



**Q8. Below is a list of benefits that parks and recreation facilities and programs may provide. Consider the three (3) that you think are most important and rank them 1-3, with '1' being most important and '3' being 3rd most important. Please choose exactly three (3) items and leave all other fields blank.**

Respondents overwhelmingly reported perceiving that parks and recreation facilities and programs provide an enhanced quality of life.

<b>FIGURE S. Importance of parks and recreation facilities</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>
Enhanced quality of life	127	82	55	264
Enhanced personal health	71	84	49	204
Enhanced economic health of community	22	39	49	110
Enhanced environmental health	71	47	51	169
Enhanced sense of community	53	48	74	175
Enhanced aesthetic appeal of community	22	47	67	136
Enhanced tourism to community	12	15	29	56
n=368				

When asked to rank benefits that parks and recreation facilities provide among a list of seven possible choices from 1 to 3, with one being most important, respondents overwhelmingly indicated an Enhanced quality of life as their first response (127 responses). Enhanced personal health and enhanced environmental health were each ranked as the most important benefit by 71 respondents. Enhanced quality of life and enhanced personal health were both ranked as the second most important benefits (82 and 84 responses respectively). An enhanced sense of community was chosen as the third most important benefit by 74 respondents.

Overall, by total number of responses for the first, second, or third most important benefit, Enhanced quality of life received the majority of responses (264 responses). Enhanced personal health received the second highest number of responses (204 responses). Two benefits ranked similarly for the third most important parks and recreation benefits by total number of responses: Enhanced sense of community (175 responses), and enhanced environmental health (169 responses). Enhanced tourism to community ranked the lowest overall as a parks and recreation benefit with 56 total responses.

**Q9. As Hendricks County grows, there will likely be an increasing demand for the facilities and services provided by HCPR. How should the county fund these new demands? Please consider each of these five alternatives and rank your order of preference using 1-5, with '1' being most preferred and '5' being least preferred.**

Respondents indicated that they felt the county should fund new demand on parks and recreation facilities and services by developing facilities that can generate revenue.



<b>FIGURE T. Funding alternatives</b>					
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
By passing a general obligation bond	40	33	65	40	109
By charging fees for programs and events	75	94	102	48	39
By increasing the appropriation HCPR receives from the general fund (i.e., property taxes)	37	46	46	69	152
By developing facilities that can generate revenue	147	106	56	29	22
By charging impact fees (i.e., fees associated with new developments)	66	78	91	89	25
n=368					

When asked to rank order of preference for funding alternatives for increasing demand for facilities and services provided by HCPR, from one to five with '1' being most preferred and '5' being least preferred, respondents overwhelmingly preferred developing facilities that can generate revenue (147 responses). Secondly, respondents tended to prefer charging fees for programs and events. Respondents tended to least prefer increasing the appropriation HCPR receives from the general fund (152 responses) and passing a general obligation bond (109 responses).

**Q10. Pretend you are a County Official with an additional \$100 available to spend on the Hendricks County parks system. It is your decision on how to spend it. How would you distribute the funds among the categories below? Your total must equal \$100 before proceeding.**

On average, respondents indicated that they would devote the most amount of any additional spending on improving and maintaining existing facilities.

<b>FIGURE U. Distribution of funds</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Average</b>
Improvements to and maintenance of existing facilities	0.00	100.00	304	24.78
Acquisition of new park land and open space	0.00	100.00	241	19.78
Development of additional recreation programs and services for YOUTH	0.00	100.00	209	14.37
Development of additional recreation programs and services for ADULTS	0.00	100.00	153	8.88
Development of additional recreation programs and services for FAMILIES	0.00	100.00	241	16.32
Development of additional recreation programs and services for SENIORS	0.00	100.00	176	12.13
Organize more community events	0.00	100.00	197	13.25
Acquisition and development of new walking and biking trails	0.00	100.00	272	23.40
Acquisition and protection of additional historical sites and structures	0.00	100.00	194	12.77
Acquisition and protection of ecologically significant areas	0.00	100.00	199	15.16
n=368				

When asked how respondents would spend an additional \$100 as a county official on the county parks





system, the highest number of respondents indicated that they would commit funds to Improvements to and maintenance of existing facilities (304 respondents) for an average funding of \$24.78. Subsequently, respondents tended to devote funding to the acquisition and development of new walking and biking trails (272 respondents) for an average of \$23.40 and to acquisition of new park land and open space (241 respondents) for an average of \$19.78. Respondents tended to devote the least amount of additional funding to development of additional recreation programs and services for adults (153 responses) with an average of \$8.88.

**Q11. How do you prefer to receive information about parks and recreation programs, events, and facilities? Consider your three (3) most preferred methods and rank them 1-3, with '1' being most important and '3' being 3rd most important. Please choose exactly three (3) items and leave all other fields blank.**

Respondents indicated that they prefer to receive information about parks and recreation programs, facilities and events through a newsletter and email.

<b>FIGURE V. Most preferred methods for receiving information</b>				
	1	2	3	Total
Organization's newsletter (e.g., the HCPR Explorer)	113	70	79	262
E-mail	112	68	58	238
Organization's website	57	113	107	277
Social networking updates (e.g., Facebook)	11	28	26	65
Newspaper	78	77	73	228
Calling organization's office	5	5	18	28
n=368" Other" responses included inserts in bills, flyers in water bills, TV, and signage				

When asked to rank the most preferred methods for receiving information about parks and recreation programs, events and facilities, respondents tended to prefer receiving information through the organization's newsletter (113 responses) and by e-mail (112 responses) as the most preferred method. By total number of responses, respondents indicated that the organization's website, the organization's newsletter and e-mail were the most preferred methods for receiving information. Respondents tended to least prefer calling the organization's office and social networking updates.

**Q12. Are there developments or programs that HCPR is pursuing that you feel are not important? A majority of respondents indicated that they were not familiar enough with HCPR activities to respond.**

Respondents were provided open-ended text boxes to respond to Questions 12 and 13. Responses to these questions were codified using qualitative analysis techniques.

When asked if there are developments or programs that HCPR is pursuing that respondents feel are not important, of 102 responding households, over 30 responded that they were not familiar with HCPR developments/programs/activities. The next most popular response was that HCPR should focus on maintaining what they have. A limited number of respondents indicated that HCPR should focus more on creating awareness about parks/programs/activities/events or that they were already satisfied with HCPR.



**Q 13. Are there developments or programs that HCPR has not yet pursued that are important to you?  
A majority of respondents indicated that they encourage continued trail development.**

Of the 372 participants, 151 provided a response to this question. The majority of responses indicated that they encourage continued trail development, especially connector trails. The second most popular response indicated a perceived need for an aquatics facility; location and type of facility varied. The third most popular response indicated a perceived need for a dog park. Several respondents also indicated that they felt the pursuit of senior programs was important, that the pursuit of nature preservation/protection and environmental education programs were important. Some respondents stated their dissatisfaction with the decentralized location of McCloud Nature Park. Some respondents indicated they felt the pursuit of disc golf courses was important. Some respondents indicated that HCPR should try to create more awareness about the agency and facilities.

### **Demographics**

The survey concluded by asking the following demographics questions:

- **Q14. What is the 5-digit zip code of your household?**
- **Q15. Please indicate the age of ALL INDIVIDUALS in your household. Indicate the number of individuals for each age category. Select one response for each individual.**
- **Q16. Please indicate your gender.**

Respondent location according to zip code indicates a representative sampling of population distribution in the county. Respondent gender is also representative of county population.

The majority of reporting households indicated that the household was composed of at least two individuals ages 26-50 or ages 51-70. Households with one individual ages 26-50 or 51-70 were the second most important responding age groups. Of households indicating that they had children, 81 households indicated that they had 1 child in the household 0-5 years; 78 households indicated that they had 1 child in the household 7-13 years; 43 households indicated that they had 1 child in the household 14-18 years. Of responding households, 44 indicated that the household included one adult of 19-25 years.

Full responses can be found in Appendix X.

**Q17. If you would like to be contacted about volunteering for Hendricks County Parks and Recreation, please provide your contact information below. This information will not be associated with your survey responses.**

Finally, the questionnaire asked respondents if they would like to be contacted about volunteering for HCPR; 58 households provided contact information.

### **Nonrandom Sample Final Results**

HCPR made the survey available to any Hendricks County resident who wished to take the survey. Responses from 131 self-selecting participants were garnered. A comparative analysis was performed and self-selecting participant responses are reported in the following section.

**Q1. Were you provided an access code for this survey?**

Non random sample responses were received from 131 self-selecting participants.

Respondents indicating that they did not have a unique key code for the survey proceeded to Q2 and began the survey.

**Q2. The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department (HCPR) serves all communities and townships within Hendricks County. In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a park run by HCPR or attended a program hosted by HCPR?**

Self-selecting respondents reported having visited or attended a HCPR park or program more often in the past year than the random survey respondents.



<b>FIGURE W. HCPR Park and Program Visitation/Attendance, Self-Selecting Survey</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
A few times a year	70	53.44%
A few times a month	41	31.30%
Never	9	6.87%
A few times a week	6	4.58%
I was not aware there was a Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department; or I'm not sure if it was a HCPR event.	5	3.82%
n=131 Base= all respondents (131 of them answered)		

Compared to the random sample respondents, the self-selecting respondents reported having visited or attended a HCPR facility or event more often in the past 12 months. Correspondingly, self-selecting respondents were largely more aware of the presence of the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department. This finding is expected, as individuals who self-select to participate generally have a greater awareness of the subject than those that do not self-select.

**Q3. Several other parks and recreation departments in and around Hendricks County are listed below. For each, please indicate how often you have visited a park or attended a program run by them in the last 12 months.**

Self-selecting respondents reported visiting other parks and programs run by other local parks and recreation departments with the same frequency as the random sample respondents.

<b>FIGURE X. Other Park and Recreation Agency Visitation/Attendance, Self-Selecting Survey</b>							
<b>Item</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>A few times per week</b>	<b>A few times a month</b>	<b>A few times a year</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Don't know/ Wasn't aware of department</b>	<b>Total</b>
Avon Parks & Recreation	0.8% 1	1.7% 2	8.5% 10	51.7% 61	33.1% 39	4.2% 5	118
Brownsburg Parks & Recreation	0% 0	5.8% 7	15.8% 19	35.0% 42	41.7% 50	1.7% 2	120
Washington Township Parks & Recreation	0% 0	0.9% 1	14.5% 17	50.4% 59	32.5% 38	1.7% 2	117
Guilford Township Parks & Recreation	1.8% 2	7.3% 8	9.1% 10	26.4% 29	45.5% 50	10.0% 11	110
Pittsboro Parks & Recreation	0% 0	0% 0	1.9% 2	17.9% 19	73.6% 78	6.6% 7	106
Danville Parks & Recreation	0% 0	3.5% 4	8.8% 10	52.6% 60	33.3% 38	1.8% 2	114
Plainfield Parks & Recreation	2.6% 3	11.1% 13	14.5% 17	47.9% 56	22.2% 26	1.7% 2	117
Indy Parks	0% 0	2.7% 3	10.8% 12	49.5% 55	35.1% 9	1.8% 2	111
Indiana State Parks	0% 0	0.8% 1	13.2% 16	71.1% 86	14.9% 18	0% 0	121
Average %	0.6%	3.8%	10.9%	45.2%	36.4%	3.2%	
n=131 Base= all respondents (131 of them answered)							



**Q4. Below is a list of facilities and services that a parks and recreation department may provide. Consider the five (5) that you think are most important to the community of Hendricks County and rank them in order of importance, with '1' being most important and '5' being 5th most important. Then consider the five (5) that are most important to you personally and rank them in order of importance, as well. Please choose exactly five (5) items for Important to Community and exactly five (5) for Important to Me. Leave all other fields blank.**

Self-selecting respondents indicated similar responses as the random group: **additional land set aside for recreation and environmental protection** as well as a **family aquatics /water park** were most important to the community and that **additional nature trails** and **additional land set aside for recreation** were most important to themselves.

<b>FIGURE Y. Facilities/services important to community, important to me, Self-Selecting Survey</b>												
	Important to Community						Important to Me					
	1	2	3	4	5	[blank]	1	2	3	4	5	[blank]
Family aquatics/water park	16	11	10	11	13	5	13	8	9	11	7	14
Additional land set aside for recreation	19	19	5	6	12	14	14	18	6	10	16	15
Additional land set aside for environmental protection	19	8	8	7	7	10	16	10	6	5	7	15
Additional nature centers and visitor centers	2	5	3	7	5	8	4	4	2	11	5	6
Programs and events about local history and culture	1	4	11	6	5	9	5	5	8	4	6	6
Programs and events about nature and science	5	9	5	7	6	13	5	8	7	7	6	11
Programs and events about health and wellness	7	8	7	0	5	3	3	5	4	3	6	10
Additional trails (nature)	4	13	17	11	3	20	12	16	23	5	11	11
Additional trails (linking community resources)	18	8	15	7	6	12	14	8	17	8	3	17
Indoor event/meeting space for rent	2	2	4	4	3	2	1	2	1	3	2	9
Outdoor event/meeting space for rent	0	2	4	4	4	8	0	2	2	8	5	8
Camping	2	6	4	2	5	12	3	3	4	4	10	7
Programs and events for children	10	13	7	12	7	9	12	9	6	7	6	20
Programs and events for teens	0	2	7	4	2	3	0	3	5	4	1	5
Programs and events for adults	2	2	3	6	3	9	3	2	5	7	5	4
Programs and events for senior citizens	2	2	2	5	8	7	4	2	3	4	4	10
Outdoor athletic/sports fields	6	3	3	4	10	2	0	0	5	3	6	19
Fitness centers	4	3	8	8	7	13	4	7	7	5	9	10
Picnic areas	3	9	4	7	6	12	2	5	6	8	5	15
Fishing areas	1	5	4	3	3	7	3	2	1	4	6	6
n=131 Other responses mentioned by more than three respondents included: trails (5), horse trails (5), dog park (4).												



### Important to community

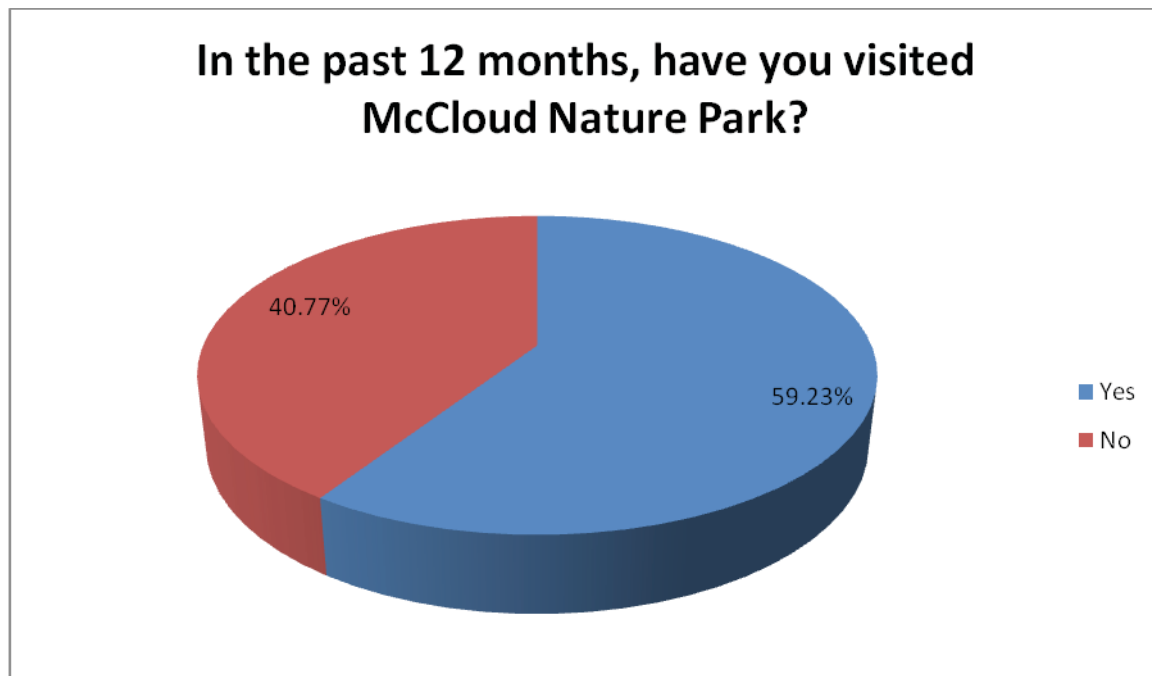
When self-selecting respondents were asked to consider and rank the 5 most important facilities/services that a parks and recreation department may provide, they indicated the same priorities for Hendricks County as the random sample. Respondents ranked **additional land set aside for both recreation and environmental protection** and **family aquatics/water park** as being the most important for the community of Hendricks County. Respondents also tended to rank **programs and events for children** and **trails** (nature and linking community resources) as most important to the community.

### Important to me

Self-selecting respondents consider **additional nature trails** and **additional land set aside for recreation** as being the most important to them. Secondly, self-selecting respondents indicated that **additional trails** (linking community resources) and a **family aquatics/water park** were also important to them.

### Q5. In the past 12 months, have you visited McCloud Nature Park (located near North Salem)?

Almost 60% of the self-selecting participants reported having visited McCloud Nature Park in the past 12 months compared to just over 25% of the random sample respondents.



n=131

**FIGURE Z. McCloud Park Visitation, Self-Selecting Survey Participants**

Of the self-selecting survey participants, 78 reported having visited McCloud Nature Park in the past 12 months; 53 reported not having visited.





**Q6. Please indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following aspects of McCloud Nature Park.**

On average, almost 84% of self-selecting respondents who have visited McCloud Nature Park in the past 12 months are 'very satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' with all amenities at the park compared to almost 80% of random sample respondents.

<b>FIGURE AA. Satisfaction levels of McCloud Nature Park</b>						
<b>Item</b>	<b>Very satis- fied</b>	<b>Somewhat satisfied</b>	<b>Somewhat dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	<b>Don't know/N/A</b>	<b>Total</b>
Nature Center	59.0% 46	26.9% 21	3.8% 3	0% 0	10.3% 8	78
Picnic shelters/areas	41.0% 32	32.1% 25	9.0% 7	0% 0	17.9% 14	78
Trails	69.2% 54	21.8% 17	0% 0	0% 0	9.0% 7	78
Assistance from staff	74.0% 57	11.7% 9	0% 0	0% 0	14.3% 11	77
Programs/activities	51.3% 40	17.9% 14	3.8% 3	0% 0	26.9% 21	78
Overall experience	77.9% 60	20.8% 16	1.3% 1	0% 0	0% 0	77
Average %	62.0%	21.9%	3.0%	0.0%	13.1%	
n=78 Base= 78 respondents triggered from Q4 (78 of them answered)						

If respondents indicated that they had visited McCloud Nature Park in the past year, they were then prompted with a question asking them to evaluate their satisfaction with the different amenities at McCloud Nature Preserve listed above.

Self-selecting survey participants' satisfaction levels with all amenities at McCloud Nature Park were higher than the random sample respondents. Respondents reported being "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the Nature Center (86%, or 67 responses), with the picnic shelters/areas (73%, or 57 responses), trails (91%, or 71 responses), assistance from staff (86%, or 66 responses), programs/activities (61%, or 54 responses), and overall experience (98.7%, or 76 responses).

**Q7. Consider the following programs and services offered by some park and recreation agencies. In some cases such programs and services are provided for free (i.e., the cost is borne by the agency). In other cases, user fees are charged to cover or offset their cost. For each item below, please indicate if you believe they should be provided at the cost of the user, the agency, or shared between the two.**

Self-selecting survey participant responses mirrored random sample participant responses: user fees should be charged for specific-use facilities such as campgrounds and swimming pools and that no fee should be charged for facilities/services providing a broader public service such as parks or different types of education programs.



**FIGURE AB. Programs and Services provided at the cost of the user, the agency, or shared Self-Selecting Survey**

Item	No fee charged (Agency covers cost)	Cost shared be- tween users and agency	User fee charged (Agency recov- ers cost)	Total
Interpretation or education programs for the PUBLIC	56.6% 73	34.9% 45	8.5% 11	129
Education programs for SCHOOL GROUPS	55.0% 71	34.9% 45	10.1% 13	129
Education programs for SPE- CIAL GROUPS (e.g., scouts, civic organizations)	27.7% 36	58.5% 76	13.8% 18	130
Admission to a city or county park	67.4% 87	27.1% 35	5.4% 7	129
Admission to a nature center or museum	43.5% 57	46.6% 61	9.9% 13	131
Admission to a swimming pool	2.3% 3	32.1% 42	65.6% 86	131
Park shelter/ pavilion use	19.8% 26	36.6% 48	43.5% 57	131
Use of athletic equipment or sporting goods	2.3% 3	34.4% 45	63.4% 83	131
Athletic events (e.g., 5K fun run)	11.5% 15	42.7% 56	45.8% 60	131
Special events (e.g., festivals, fairs)	28.7% 37	41.1% 53	30.2% 39	129
Use of campground with facili- ties	3.8% 5	26.2% 34	70.0% 91	130
Use of campground without facilities	19.2% 25	37.7% 49	43.1% 56	130
Average %	28.1%	37.7%	34.2%	
n=131 Base= all respondents (131 of them answered)				

**Q8. Below is a list of benefits that parks and recreation facilities and programs may provide. Consider the three (3) that you think are most important and rank them 1-3, with '1' being most important and '3' being 3rd most important. Please choose exactly three (3) items and leave all other fields blank.**

Self-selecting survey participant responses mirrored random sample participant responses: self-selecting respondents also overwhelmingly reported perceiving that parks and recreation facilities and programs provide an enhanced quality of life.



**FIGURE AC. Importance of parks and recreation facilities, Self-Selecting Survey Participants**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>
Enhanced quality of life	62	27	24	113
Enhanced personal health	17	33	16	66
Enhanced economic health of community	5	15	14	34
Enhanced environmental health	24	19	20	63
Enhanced sense of community	20	14	27	61
Enhanced aesthetic appeal of community	5	15	25	45
Enhanced tourism to community	1	7	8	16
n=131 Base= all respondents (131 of them answered)				

Self-selecting survey participants responses were similar to the random sample participant responses. The only difference in the responses is that the self-selecting participants tended to indicate more frequently that parks and recreation facilities provide an enhanced sense of community.

**Q9. As Hendricks County grows, there will likely be an increasing demand for the facilities and services provided by HCPR. How should the county fund these new demands? Please consider each of these five alternatives and rank your order of preference using 1-5, with '1' being most preferred and '5' being least preferred.**

Self-selecting survey participant responses mirrored random sample participant responses: Self-selecting respondents indicated that they felt the county should fund new demand on parks and recreation facilities and services by developing facilities that can generate revenue.

**FIGURE AD. Funding alternatives, Self-Selecting Survey Participants**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
By passing a general obligation bond	18	11	16	40	31
By charging fees for programs and events	25	37	27	18	14
By increasing the appropriation HCPR receives from the general fund (i.e., property taxes)	1	19	18	18	50
By developing facilities that can generate revenue	43	34	25	12	11
By charging impact fees (i.e., fees associated with new developments)	31	24	38	24	7
n=131					



**Q10. Pretend you are a County Official with an additional \$100 available to spend on the Hendricks County parks system. It is your decision on how to spend it. How would you distribute the funds among the categories below? Your total must equal \$100 before proceeding.**

Self-selecting survey participant responses mirrored random sample participant responses: respondents indicated that they would devote the most amount of any additional spending on improving and maintaining existing facilities.

<b>FIGURE AE. Distribution of funds, Self-Selecting Survey Participants</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Average</b>
Improvements to and maintenance of existing facilities	5.00	100.00	100	24.37
Acquisition of new park land and open space	0.00	100.00	89	23.42
Development of additional recreation programs and services for YOUTH	0.00	55.00	60	13.93
Development of additional recreation programs and services for ADULTS	0.00	33.00	46	9.02
Development of additional recreation programs and services for FAMILIES	0.00	100.00	77	18.43
Development of additional recreation programs and services for SENIORS	0.00	20.00	49	8.14
Organize more community events	0.00	100.00	62	13.81
Acquisition and development of new walking and biking trails	2.00	100.00	97	26.40
Acquisition and protection of additional historical sites and structures	0.00	100.00	71	14.34
Acquisition and protection of ecologically significant areas	0.00	100.00	74	17.23
n=131				

**Q11. How do you prefer to receive information about parks and recreation programs, events, and facilities? Consider your three (3) most preferred methods and rank them 1-3, with '1' being most important and '3' being 3rd most important. Please choose exactly three (3) items and leave all other fields blank.**

Self-selecting respondents indicated that they prefer to receive information about parks and recreation programs, facilities and events via email.

<b>FIGURE AF. Most preferred methods for receiving information, Self-Selecting Survey Participants</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>
Organization's newsletter (e.g., the HCPR Explorer)	30	19	32	81
E-mail	48	31	13	92
Organization's website	32	36	32	100
Social networking updates (e.g., Facebook)	2	11	14	27
Newspaper	19	27	24	70
Calling organization's office	1	4	7	12
n=131 Base= all respondents (131 of them answered)				



Self-selecting participant responses differed from random sample responses slightly. Self-selecting respondents most prefer to receive information about parks and recreation programs, facilities and events via email. By total number of responses, respondents indicated that the organization's website (100 responses), e-mail (92 responses) and the organization's newsletter (81 responses) were the most preferred methods for receiving information.

**Q12. Are there developments or programs that HCPR is pursuing that you feel are not important?**

Respondents were provided open-ended text boxes to respond to Questions 12 and 13. Responses to these questions were codified using qualitative analysis techniques.

As with random sample respondents, a majority of self-selecting respondents indicated that they were not familiar enough with HCPR activities to respond.

**Q 13. Are there developments or programs that HCPR has not yet pursued that are important to you?**

As with random sample respondents, a majority of self-selecting respondents indicated that they encourage continued trail development.

A majority of responses indicated that the pursuit of trail development (connector trails, nature trails, fitness trails, horse trails) were important to respondents. Among a wide range of responses, several respondents indicated that the pursuit of an aquatics facility, dog park, and historical preservation were important to them.

**Demographics**

- **Q14. What is the 5-digit zip code of your household?**
- **Q15. Please indicate the age of ALL INDIVIDUALS in your household. Indicate the number of individuals for each age category. Select one response for each individual.**
- **Q16. Please indicate your gender.**

The zip code distribution and the household composition according to age of the random and nonrandom samples are similar. The self-selecting participants indicated an approximate 10% higher level of female respondents than the random sample respondents.

**Q17. If you would like to be contacted about volunteering for Hendricks County Parks and Recreation, please provide your contact information below. This information will not be associated with your survey responses.**

Of the self-selecting respondents, 16 provided contact information to be contacted about volunteering for HCPR.





## Needs Analysis

As part of the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands conducted a benchmarking study and level of service (LOS) analysis. These two efforts offer quantitative information to use in conjunction with qualitative information, collected during public engagement and the system inventory, to complete an analysis of park and recreation needs in Hendricks County.

### Benchmark Comparison

The purpose of benchmarking is to assist the planning team in setting standards for HCPR's parks and recreation facilities and to measure where HCPR stands in comparison to other chosen agencies in regard to park acreage, services, budgets, staffing, cost recovery, and other attributes. This information provides an indication of how the Department delivers services to residents compared to the other agencies. It should be noted that the information presented here is reflective of the current economic recession, and findings should be considered in that context.

The benchmarking study provides an exploration of the park and recreation facilities, a community and agency overview, and an evaluation of agency resources of five counties determined to be comparable to Hendricks County. Beyond a purely organizational analysis, the benchmarking study also assists in exposing community service factors that increase quality of life, thereby creating positive economic impacts. Hendricks County decision-makers can decide how they wish to compare with these other counties and to continue to research best practices. Furthermore, managers can use this analysis to benchmark against itself and monitor improvements and outcomes over time.

The benchmark process is not intended to find counties that match Hendricks County exactly. The main purpose is to assist the county in finding comparisons for measurement and setting standards. By delineating the parks and recreation system of any one of these counties, HCPR can compare, contrast and emulate its future programs, facilities, and administration in a measurable context.

The following benchmark counties were selected:

- Hamilton County, IN
- Lake County, IN
- Saint Joseph County, IN
- Iredell County, NC
- Darke County, OH

Although some data was collected using information from official county websites, the benchmark pro-

cess depends significantly on the voluntary reporting of some information on the part of the participating agency through phone and email communications. The benchmark counties were chosen in collaboration with HCPR staff and were chosen because of their similar nature to Hendricks County, particularly regarding the proximity of the park system to a major metropolitan area.

Key benchmarking data sought included:

- Population
- Park acreage
- Staffing levels
- Government fund appropriation
- Revenue
- Existence of local parks systems and acreage within system

Depending on data used in a benchmarking study, many variables can affect direct comparisons. Such variables include the size of the adjacent metropolitan area, differences in fund source structure, and methods of reporting.

### Level of Service Analysis

This section also identifies Level of Service (LOS) guidelines for parkland and trail facilities in Hendricks County by synthesizing information and research conducted throughout the planning process. LOS guidelines provide recommendations for a minimum service standard for park acreage and certain facility types. The standards provide guidelines for HCPR to plan and build parks and recreation facilities needed to serve the community adequately. LOS standards are intended to ensure that a balance of facilities and services are provided fairly and strategically across the community.

Applications of LOS guidelines as standards are not mandatory; indeed, they should be considered as guidelines that express the desires of the community to provide a balanced and equitable distribution of facilities. The application of LOS guidelines is directly impacted by land supply, tax base, resource availability, willingness of constituents to fund, political support, and recreational demand. Establishing unrealistic LOS guidelines can have the impact of creating a system that cannot be sustained without significant additional investment.

In this plan, the use of LOS standards for park and recreation facilities is based primarily on the Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The planning team used a basic model to determine the recommended LOS for HCPR. This



model consisted of six factors contributing to the specification of standards for the agency and the county:

- LOS of existing local facilities
- LOS of benchmark communities
- Public engagement findings
- Population projections, demands, and trends
- Local administrative and financial trends

- National professional and industry trends

It is important to remember that standards are based on a variety of methodologies that are subjective in nature. Ultimately, communities must reach a consensus about the amount of parkland, open space, and recreation facilities required to maintain the quality of life that is desired.

<b>FIGURE AG. Agency Resources</b>								
<b>Item</b>	<b>St. Joseph County, IN</b>	<b>Iredell County, NC</b>	<b>Lake County, IN</b>	<b>Hamilton County, IN</b>	<b>Darke County, OH</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Hendricks County, IN</b>
Full-time Employees	25	12	81	19	5	28.4	19	3
Full-time Employees per 1,000 Residents	0.09	0.08	0.15	0.07	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.02
Part-time Employees	8 - 30	225+	Not known	50 (approx.)	2	N/A	N/A	6
Government Fund Appropriation (2010, except where noted)	\$1,361,458	\$1,202,875	\$10,424,528 <sup>i</sup>	\$3,145,951 <sup>ii</sup>	\$440,000	\$3,314,962	\$1,361,458	\$567,606 <sup>viii</sup>
% of Total Government Budget	2.0% <sup>iii</sup>	Not known	5.5 % <sup>iv</sup>	4.0%	Not Known	3.8%	4.0%	1.7%
Expenditure per Person for Parks and Recreation	\$5.09	\$7.60	\$21.00 <sup>v</sup>	\$11.26	\$8.49	\$10.69	\$8.49	\$4.04
Total Revenues from Fees and Charges	\$249,000	N/A	\$ 7,192,222	\$181,500	Not Known	\$2,540,907	\$249,000	\$15,800
Annual Program Participation	40,000	6,500	34,584	56, 015	75,000	42,420	40,000	7,747
Annual Park Visitation	257,000	100,000	942,821	Not known	150,000	362,455	203,500	28,000 <sup>vii</sup>
Total Park Acres (of Benchmark Agency)	1,836	187	6,136	1,445	400	2,000	1,445	441 <sup>ix</sup>
Total Park Acres (of Benchmark Agency) per 1,000	6.8	1.2	12.4	5.2	7.7	6.7	6.8	3.1
# of Local Park Systems w/in Service Area	9	2	17 <sup>vi</sup>	9	3	8	9	7
Total Acres of Local Park Systems	2,831	Not known	4,215	2,363	128	2,384	2,597	818

<sup>i</sup> Includes tax levy allocation

<sup>ii</sup> 2009

<sup>iii</sup> Dedicated to agency from tax levy

<sup>iv</sup> Appropriation only

<sup>v</sup> Includes tax levy allocation

<sup>vi</sup> Includes 14 agencies and 3 committees

<sup>vii</sup> McCloud Nature Park only

<sup>viii</sup> Includes General Fund

<sup>ix</sup> Does not include W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park (no public access)



**FIGURE AH. Community & Agency Overview**

Item	St. Joseph County, IN	Iredell County, NC	Lake County, IN	Hamilton County, IN	Darke County, OH	Average	Median	Hendricks County, IN
Population (est. 2009)	267,613	158,153	494,211	279,287	51,814	250,216	267,613	140,606
Population Growth (2000-2009)	0.8%	28.9%	2.0%	52.8%	-2/8%	16.3%	2.0%	35.1%
Total Land Area (sq.m.)	457.3	575.6	497.0	397.9	599.8	505.5	497.0	408.4
Total Land Area per 1,000 people (sq.m.)	1.7	3.6	1.0	1.4	11.6	3.9	1.7	2.9

**FIGURE AI. Parks, Facilities, and Services**

Item	St. Joseph County, IN	Iredell County, NC	Lake County, IN	Hamilton County, IN	Darke County, OH	Average	Median	Hendricks County, IN
Number of Parks	10	4	12	13	11	9.75	11	2 vi
Total Hard Surface Trail Miles	0.6	0.0	12.7	14.5	12	0.2	0.1	.2
Hard Surface Trail Miles per 10,000 people	0.02	0.00	0.26	0.51	2.32	0.20	0.14	0.21
Camping Opportunities	None	1 Camp-ground, 1 Group Site	1 Group Site	1 Camp-ground	None	N/A	N/A	None
Festivals/Events Sponsored by Agency	1 i	2 ii	None reported	8 iii	4 iv	3.6	2	1 v

i Sugar Camp Days

ii Triathlon; Golf Tournament

iii Cool Creek Concert Series; Coxhall Concert Series; Potter's Bridge Fall Festival; May Migratory Bird Count; Audubon Christmas Bird Count; Holiday Happenings; Jukebox Saturday Car Show; Haunted Trails

iv Candlelight Dinners, Maple Syrup Festival, Prairie Days

v Summer Fun Run Series

## Results and Analysis

The Indiana SCORP recommends that each county provide 55 acres of park and recreation areas per 1,000 people (55 ac./1,000). According to those standards, 20 ac./1,000 should be public local recreation acres owned by municipalities, townships, counties, or private organizations that allow public access. The remaining 35 ac./1,000 should be public regional recreation areas, such as parkland owned by the State or Federal government.

Currently, the total amount of publically-accessible land provided to Hendricks County by HCPR is 441 acres, or 3.1 ac./1,000. When parkland owned by other local providers is included, the total becomes 1,259 acres, or 9.0 ac./1,000. This represents a significant shortfall based upon the total recommended standard of 55 ac./1,000 specified in the SCORP. Even if considering only the recommended amount of public local recreation acreage of 20 ac./1,000, the county meets less than half of the standard. As such, the 2006-10 SCORP identified Hendricks as a "critical county" – one that not only has a deficiency of acreage, but has a population growth rate above the statewide average of 3.1%.



Guidelines established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provide additional insight by presenting LOS in terms of agency rather than geographic area. NRPA suggests 6.25 ac./1,000 is a minimum LOS for a local agency and 10.5 ac./1,000 as an optimum level. The average and median LOS acreage for the five benchmark communities are 6.7 ac./1,000 and 6.8 ac./1,000, respectively. Compared against other benchmark agencies, HCPR (3.1 ac./1,000) has the lowest LOS with the exception of Iredell County, NC (1.2 ac./1,000).

It should be noted that Hendricks County residents responding to the random sample survey overwhelmingly reported that they recognize parks and recreation facilities and services as providing an enhanced quality of life. LOS standards should be considered in the context of other factors unique to the planning area, such as demand, availability of open space, and demographic trends. In light of these standards, this analysis finds that Hendricks County lacks a significant amount of parks and recreation acreage considering its rate of growth and increasing demand for the use of existing open space.

Without considering other factors, the current LOS standard would suggest that Hendricks County strive to acquire additional parkland to become comparable to benchmark communities. However, public engagement results indicated a desire to balance this approach with the need to prioritize the maintenance of existing facilities. Therefore, this plan recommends growth to a LOS of 6.0-9.0 ac./1,000, but with deliberate intention to prevent the acquisition of land or capital that would overburden the department's ability to provide critical maintenance to existing facilities. This amount of growth would aid the county in achieving the State of Indiana's standard for public local recreation acreage, although it would likely not achieve it without the addition of acreage to other municipal or township systems, as well. Furthermore, an increase to 6.0-9.0 ac./1,000 would align HCPR more closely to NRPA guidelines for agencies.

The review of staffing levels in this Needs Analysis indicates that HCPR employs the fewest full-time personnel (6 employees) of all benchmark agencies, regardless of population, size, or budget. The average number of full-time employees of benchmark agencies is 0.10 per 1,000 people; the median is 0.09 per 1,000. HCPR employs 0.02 per 1,000. While this indicates a need for additional staffing, it also demonstrates the effectiveness of HCPR staff considering the growth of the department since the first employee was hired in 2003.

Expenditures per person for parks and recreation in Hendricks County were \$4.04, which is lower than all other benchmark counties. Overall, the average dollar amount spent per person was \$10.69. Relative to other county programs, HCPR receives 1.7% of the county budget which is below the benchmark average of 3.8%. Research conducted through telephone calls and internet searches showed that HCPR's funding level ranks 15th among all counties in Indiana despite the fact that it is the 11th in terms of population and the second-fastest growing.

Like Hendricks County, St. Joseph, Lake, and Hamilton Counties collected revenue for programs and services. Hamilton County receives the lowest amount of revenue at \$181,500. Hendricks County ranks below all of the benchmarks in terms of revenue from fees and charges with \$15,800.

The level of service of hard surfaced trailways for HCPR (0.2 m./1,000) falls significantly below the average of all benchmark communities (8.0 m./1,000). There is a high degree of public support concerning trails and connectivity, and an investment to expand hard surface trail mileage by a small distance would significantly increase the LOS. After development, hard surface trails require relatively little maintenance compared to other facilities and can provide a powerful return on investment in terms of community support and participation.

This plan recommends an increase in level of service for trails, but recognizes that several factors make it difficult to determine a target LOS ratio. Not enough data on soft surfaced trailways was available from benchmark communities to inform the LOS analysis fully. Soft- and hard-surfaced trails attract different types of recreational uses but also have a degree of substitutability, so it is difficult to determine a recommended LOS for either without sufficient information on both types. Furthermore, several different organizations across the town, township, regional, and state levels – and across the public and non-profit sectors – influence the level of service offered to Hendricks County residents. Therefore, the reported LOS for HCPR alone does not fully represent the true service level. A recommendation of this plan articulated in the subsequent section on goals and action plans advises that HCPR adopt a leadership role in trail planning throughout the county. If accomplished, a more informed trailway LOS can be determined.



**Recreation Planning is a process that relates the leisure time of people to space. It is an art and a science that uses the concepts and methods of many disciplines to provide public and private leisure opportunities, and money to accommodate human needs.**  
*Seymour M. Gold, Recreation and Planning Design*



## Action Plan



The final step of the IDNR master planning process is the development of an Action Plan. This plan serves as a synthesis of the information gathered throughout the planning process, an ordering of needs, desires and priorities for the recreation system, and concrete action items for the park system over a five-year horizon.

The action plan has been organized into six themes that relate not only to the mission of the parks and recreation department, but also connect to broader county goals. Through this action plan, Hendricks County Parks and Recreation will work to manage and protect county assets, teach and connect through programming, provide inclusive recreation, connect people and places, reach and involve the community, and enhance organizational capacity.

<b>MANAGE AND PROTECT ASSETS</b>
<b>Goals</b>
<b>HCPR will:</b>
Provide recreation amenities to meet the needs of Hendricks County residents
Model sustainable environmental practices
Promote the wise stewardship of natural resources
<b>Strategies</b>
Provide ecologically-oriented and environmentally sustainable recreation amenities
Actively pursue the acquisition of additional parklands
Provide recreation amenities that complement those offered by other county parks departments
Seek opportunities for partnerships and collaborations to provide recreation amenities
<b>Action Items</b>
<b>McCloud Nature Park</b>
Reforest park entrance
Reconstruct wetlands located on south end
Add arboretum plantings
Install creek access improvements to canoe launch
Construct bridges and associated boardwalks on south end
Construct pavilions to meet facility demand on north side of park
Develop plan for public art installations
Construct low-flow crossing at Big Walnut Creek
Design and construct new entrance
<b>Sodalis Nature Park</b>
Complete phase one improvements as outlined in site master plan
Coordinate phase two parking development with Planning Department (based upon need)
Develop phase two parking (if need dictates)
Seek location for the development of an environmental education center
Plan and develop environmental education center (if location is acquired)
Pursue development of additional IAA protected land as publicly accessible park land
<b>W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park</b>
Complete site master plan



<b>TEACH AND CONNECT THROUGH PROGRAMMING</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
Promote the health and well-being of county residents	
Provide programming opportunities to benefit the Hendricks County community	
Attract visitors from outside Hendricks County	
Promote the environmental health of Hendricks County	
<b>Strategies</b>	
Partner with Health Community to promote healthy lifestyles	
Seek shared development of community programs with local parks agencies	
Teach environmental sustainability and conservation concepts and practices through programs	
Use sustainable park maintenance practices as program opportunities	
<b>Action Items</b>	
Identify and implement new programs to encourage healthy lifestyles	
Identify and implement new conservation and environmental sustainability programs	
Annually evaluate program roster and identify/implement program changes and additions	

<b>ENHANCE INCLUSIVE RECREATION</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
Offer recreation amenities and programs that are accessible to all regardless of age, race, ability or income	
<b>Strategies</b>	
Provide basic services and programs that are free of charge	
Modify existing amenities, where feasible, to meet ADA standards	
Incorporate ADA accessibility standards when adding new amenities	
<b>Action Items</b>	
<b>System-wide</b>	
Adopt ADA procedures	
Communicate accessible amenities and procedures on web page and in newsletters	
Identify accessible trails on way-finding signage and park maps	
<b>McCloud Nature Park</b>	
Provide accessible parking to meet ADA standards	
Install an ADA accessible route linking accessible parking, the nature center and the shelter	
Replace concrete floor under existing pavilion	
Add number and diversity of multi-sensory interactive exhibits	



CONNECT PEOPLE AND PLACES	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
	Lead the creation of physically interconnected county recreation system
<b>Strategies</b>	
	Work with the Planning Department to pursue the development of a county-wide trail system
	Advocate for trails linking major county population centers
	Assist with the development of regional trails
<b>Action Items</b>	
	Continue right-of-way acquisition and development of the Vandalia Trail
	Collaborate with towns to develop modern, accessible trailheads on the Vandalia Trail

REACH AND INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
	Connect county residents to recreation opportunities and amenities
	Serve as a county-wide recreation liaison
	Communicate effectively with the public, county visitors, policy makers, partners, volunteers and employees
<b>Strategies</b>	
	Regularly meet and collaborate with federal, state, county, regional, and non-government agencies regarding efforts that affect the delivery of park and recreation services within the county.
	Collaborate with the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County, plus other public and private organizations, to increase awareness, advocacy, development, and support of HCPR.
<b>Action Items</b>	
	Develop annual reports and distribute to partners and public
	Create and distribute via website comprehensive directory of park resources in Hendricks County



<b>ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	
<b>HCPR will:</b>	
Use an administrative model that ensures that HCPR's financial and capital resources are sustainable over the long-term.	
Exemplify best practices in human resource management, budgeting, and communications.	
Ensure management plans, strategies, and analyses are sound, collaborative, and useful.	
Adopt policies and management practices that lead by example in areas of conservation and environmental management.	
<b>Strategies</b>	
Work with the County Council to investigate the establishment of an operational and capital development non-reverting account.	
Support the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County in their efforts to establish and cultivate an annual donation program, donor events, major gift opportunities, and endowments.	
Identify and develop policies for resource allocation and cost recovery that reflect the values of the community and the responsibility the county has to provide services.	
Support the orientation and education of park board members	
<b>Action Items</b>	
Develop land acquisition strategy	
Prepare a staffing gap analysis to identify personnel needs to accommodate needs of the community.	
Conduct an analysis of equipment and asset distribution throughout the HCPR service area, and identify central and satellite storage locations.	
Develop a long-term maintenance and equipment replacement schedule; incorporate into long-term budget.	
Conduct an analysis of pricing and fees regarding facilities and services that align with community values and reflect the responsibility of the county government.	
Conduct an analysis to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of impact fees.	
Establish a naming rights policy.	
Create a well-rounded volunteer program to support all major departmental functions.	
Develop an innovative comprehensive marketing plan and public/media relations plan and evaluate bi-annually.	
Develop a Memorandum of Agreement with the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County	
Initiate a feasibility study for providing public camping facilities	



## Action Item Matrix

The following Action Item Matrix assigns a proposed timeline, cost estimate and potential funding source for each action item included in the previous action plan.

Theme	Action	Timeline (years)			Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
		0-2	3-5	6-10		
<b>MANAGE AND PROTECT ASSETS</b>						
	<b>McCloud Nature Park</b>					
	Reforest park entrance		•		\$12,150	Capital Budget
	Reconstruct wetlands located on south end	•			\$187,500	Grants, Donation, Capital Budget
	Add arboretum plantings	•	•	•	\$6,000/year	Capital Budget, Grants
	Install creek access improvements to canoe launch		•		\$10,000	Capital Budget
	Construct bridges and associated boardwalks on south end	•			\$80,000	Donations, Grants
	Construct pavilions to meet facility demand on north side of park		•		\$75,000	Capital Budget, Donations, Partnerships
	Develop plan for public art installations	•			\$500 - \$650	Operations
	Construct low-flow crossing at Big Walnut Creek	•			\$40,000	Capital Budget, Donations
	Design and construct new entrance		•		\$360,000	Capital Budget, Donations, Grants
	<b>Sodalis Nature Park</b>					
	Complete phase one improvements as outlined in site master plan	•			\$159,500	Capital Budget, Operations
	Coordinate phase two parking development with Planning Department (based upon need)	•	•		\$250 - \$500	Operations
	Develop phase two parking (if need dictates)		•	•	\$75,000	Capital Budget
	Seek location for the development of an environmental education center	•			\$500 - \$1750	Operations
	Plan and develop environmental education center (if location is acquired)		•		\$200,000 - \$400,000	Capital Budget, Grants
	Pursue development of additional IAA protected land as publically accessible park land	•	•	•	\$5000 - \$8000	Operations
	<b>W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park</b>					
	Complete site master plan		•		\$45,000 - \$55,000	Operations, grants





Theme	Action	Timeline (years)			Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
		0-2	3-5	6-10		
TEACH AND CONNECT THROUGH PROGRAMMING						
	Identify and implement new programs to encourage healthy lifestyles	•	•	•	\$1600/year	Operations, Partnerships, Fees
	Identify and implement new conservation and environmental sustainability programs	•	•	•	\$3500/year	Operations, Grants, Partnerships
	Annually evaluate program roster and identify/implement program changes and additions	•	•	•	\$250 - \$300/year	Operations
PROVIDE INCLUSIVE RECREATION						
	McCloud Nature Park					
	Provide accessible parking to meet ADA standards	•			\$15,000 - \$20,000	Capital Budget
	Install an ADA accessible route linking the nature center and the shelter	•			\$3750 - \$4500	Capital Budget
	Replace concrete floor under existing pavilion	•			\$10,000	Capital Budget
	Identify accessible trails on way-finding signage and park maps	•			\$850	Operations
	Add number and diversity of multi-sensory interactive exhibits		•	•	\$2500 - \$5000	Capital Budget, Donations
	Other					
	Adopt ADA procedures	•			\$150	Operations
	Communicate accessible amenities and procedures on web page and in newsletters	•			\$200	Operations
CONNECT PEOPLE AND PLACES						
	Continue right-of-way acquisition and development of the Vandalia Trail	•	•	•	\$832,000 - \$3,000,000	Grants, Donations
	Collaborate with towns to develop modern, accessible trailheads on the Vandalia Trail		•	•	\$125,000 - \$400,000/each	Grants, Operations, Partnerships



Theme	Action	Timeline (years)			Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
		0-2	3-5	6-10		
REACH AND INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY						
	Develop annual reports and distribute to partners and public	•	•	•	\$1,500/year	Operations
	Create and distribute via web-site comprehensive directory of park resources in Hendricks County	•			\$2,500 - \$5,000	Operations
ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY						
	Develop land acquisition strategy	•			\$750	Operations
	Initiate a feasibility study for providing public camping facilities	•			\$10,000 - \$15,000	Operations
	Prepare a staffing gap analysis to identify personnel needs to accommodate needs of the community.	•			\$500	Operations
	Conduct an analysis of equipment and asset distribution throughout the HCPR service area, and identify central and satellite storage locations.	•			\$500	Operations
	Develop a long-term maintenance and equipment replacement schedule; incorporate into long-term budget.	•			\$500	Operations
	Conduct an analysis of pricing and fees regarding facilities and services that align with community values and reflect the responsibility of the county government.	•			\$500	Operations
	Conduct an analysis to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of impact fees.		•		\$10,000 - \$15,000	Operations
	Establish a naming rights policy.		•		\$500	Operations
	Create a well-rounded volunteer program to support all major department functions.	•			\$3,000 - \$5,000	Operations
	Develop an innovative comprehensive marketing plan and public/media relations plan and evaluate bi-annually.	•	•	•	\$5,000 - \$7,500	Operations
	Develop a Memorandum of Agreement with the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County.	•			\$500	Operations



## Land Acquisition Priorities

Hendricks County is underserved in terms of available recreation land. As well, the sentiment amongst county stakeholders and residents is that the HCPR department should acquire additional recreation land “while it is available.”

- Hendricks County has been identified as a ‘critical county’ as it does not meet the state’s recommended recreation acreage (related to its population) and it is experiencing a high level of growth.
- Stakeholders identified conservation of open land and land banking as a primary need as did participants in the public meetings.
- Other county planning documents echo the need for additional park land.
- Participants in the community survey also ranked the acquisition of additional park land as a top priority.

Although the need is great, resources for land acquisition are limited and not all potential recreation land is equally advantageous in meeting the needs of the county or relating to the mission of HCPR. While any viable opportunity to acquire land should be considered, the following criteria have been established for prioritizing potential opportunities for land acquisition.

It should be noted that in the context of this discussion, the term “acquire” may mean obtaining ownership of property, or, as is the case with Sodalís Nature Park, it may mean obtaining a long-term use agreement or other arrangement that permits the use of land by HCPR.

### Land Contiguous to Existing HCPR Parkland

Land abutting the existing HCPR parks, McCloud Nature Park, Sodalís Nature Park, and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, would provide opportunities to expand the benefits/recreation opportunities of these parks, while providing efficient use of HCPR resources.

- An expanded park will provide additional opportunities for larger native communities/ecosystems, such as forests, prairies, and wetlands. This encourages a more stable and diverse ecosystem, offering greater support to wildlife, and buffering sensitive ecosystems from outside development.
- Generally, the greater the number and extent of recreation opportunities at a single park, the further people will travel to visit that location. State Parks, for example, attract a wide audience, in

part because of the extended recreation opportunities that they offer in a single location. Closer to home, Eagle Creek Park is another example of a park that attracts a wide audience due to its size and variety of recreation experiences.

An expansion of the existing HCPR parks would permit new and/or expanded recreation opportunities at a single location.

- Expanding the existing parks would permit the HCPR staff to concentrate resources in areas of the county where they already have maintenance activities scheduled, reducing the need to duplicate/move equipment and travel between different park locations.

### Land in High Growth Areas of Hendricks County

The east portion of the county has seen considerable development, which is projected to continue. Opportunities for parkland, particularly large tracts of land suitable for nature-oriented recreation, will become scarcer as development continues. At the same time, the increased population will need more recreation opportunities. Therefore, there is a need to add park land in these areas before the land is simply not available.

### Land in Underserved Areas of Hendricks County

Several areas of the county were identified as underserved: Brownsburg, particularly to the north; Pittsboro, and the I-70/State Road 39 Interchange, which has the potential for significant future development. These areas of the county also are currently experiencing high growth, or have the potential for significant growth in the future.

While, it should be noted that the west portion of the county has fewer parks, it also has a smaller population and less growth. Should the county development continue to move to the west, the need for additional recreation in the west portion of the county will become more pressing.

### Land Acquired/Used Through Partnerships or Innovative Funding

Limited funding calls for creative measures to acquire land. HCPR has already used partnerships (in its agreement for Sodalís Nature Park), and innovative funding arrangements (in acquiring land for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park). These arrangements have permitted the department to leverage available resources to acquire much-needed recreation land.



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### **Land Along Blueway and Greenway Corridors**

Aerial maps of Hendricks County show that portions of the remaining wooded areas are found along natural blueway and greenway corridors. These natural corridors serve important functions in native communities. They encourage the movement of wildlife between native ecosystems thus promoting:

- Diversity of species
- Greater opportunities for an expanded gene pool
- A broader base of food and shelter sources

As well, these corridors can also provide opportunities for human interconnection throughout the county when they are used as trail corridors.

The protection and use of these corridors could be secured through land acquisition, a partnership with other environmentally oriented organizations or the use of easements and use agreements with present land owners.

### **Land Contiguous to Existing or Proposed Trails**

Hendricks County stakeholders and residents expressed their strong desire for additional trails of all kinds during the public input portion of this master plan process. In addition to acquiring land for the development of the trail corridor, the acquisition of land for parks adjacent to the trails is also desirable. Such land would provide opportunities for destinations along the trail route, as well as trailheads and access points to the trail itself.

Both larger parks, that provide recreation amenities and a user destination, and smaller trailheads with limited amenities, are valuable. As development along trail routes occurs, it may be possible to partner with local developers to acquire space for trailheads and/or parkland within planned communities/development. The trailhead would serve as a positive selling feature for the developer, while providing new recreation opportunities for Hendricks County residents.

### **Land with Existing Natural Communities or Historic/Cultural Character**

Park land with existing natural, historic or cultural features provides opportunities to preserve the character of Hendricks County and offers opportunities for related recreation, programming and interpretive learning. In particular, land that would permit the development of water based amenities or activities would provide new recreation opportunities to the county.

# Economic Impact Analysis



Widespread research on the economic impact of recreation amenities suggests they can have a significant positive economic impact on the communities they serve. Parks and trail amenities have been shown to increase quality of life, contribute to economic development, increase tax revenues, stimulate tourism, improve health and well-being, and contribute to a healthier environment.

As a part of the master planning process, the planning team evaluated the economic benefits Hendricks County Park and Recreation brings to the county through its existing and proposed amenities. While researchers have found it challenging to project by how much recreation improvements impact a community in terms of exact dollars, it is clear that improvements to park and recreation systems do correspond with improvements in economic health and sustainability.

Therefore, the evaluation of each potential benefit includes anecdotal and statistical information from studies and research on other park and trail systems, as well as extrapolations and future considerations for the HCPR system.

## Economic Development

Parks and trails have been shown to contribute to a higher quality of life and can be a deciding factor in where businesses and residents choose to locate. As well, parks and trails can bring revenue to local businesses through recreation associated purchases of food, drinks, transportation, and equipment. Thus parks and trails can both spur new development in communities and help to support existing businesses.

According to an American Planning Association paper on parks and economic development, rec-

In 2003, The Trust for Public Land's Center for City Park Excellence gathered two dozen park experts and economists for a colloquium to analyze how park systems economically benefit cities. The center identified seven attributes of city park systems that provide economic value and are measurable. They found that:

"Not every aspect of a park system can be quantified. For instance, the mental health value of a walk in the woods is not known, and there is no agreed-upon methodology for valuing the carbon sequestration value of a city park. But seven major factors—property value, tourism, direct use, health, community cohesion, clean water, and clean air—have been enumerated....

Two of the factors provide a city with direct income to its treasury. The first factor is increased property tax from the increase in property value because of proximity to parks....The second is increased sales tax on spending by tourists who visit primarily because of the city's parks. (Beyond the tax receipts, these factors also bolster the collective wealth of residents through property appreciation and tourism revenue.)

Three other factors provide city residents with direct savings. By far the largest amount stems from residents' use of the city's free parkland and free (or low-cost) recreation opportunities, which saves them from having to purchase these items in the marketplace. The second is the health benefit—savings in medical costs—due to the beneficial aspects of exercise in the parks. And the third is the community cohesion benefit of people banding together to save and improve their neighborhood parks. This "know-your-neighbor" social capital helps ward off antisocial problems that would otherwise cost the city more in police and fire protection, prisons, counseling, and rehabilitation."

reation amenities are an important factor in attracting workers. "Workers attracted to an area are then positioned to put money back into the local economy through jobs, housing, and taxes, which then contribute to parks."

Other key findings that support the economic development benefits of parks and trails include the following items reported in a Rails to Trails Conservancy white paper on Trails and Greenways:

- Following the opening of the Mineral Belt Trail in Leadville, Colorado, the city reported a 19 percent increase in sales tax revenues. Owners of restaurants and lodging facilities gained customers who came

into town specifically to ride the trail.

- Visitors to Ohio's Little Miami Scenic Trail spend an average of \$13.54 per visit on food, beverages and transportation. In addition they spend an estimated \$277 annually on clothing, equipment and accessories to use during these trail trips.
- Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphey credited trail construction for contributing significantly to a dramatic downtown revitalization that includes millions of dollars in economic development including a new stadium, housing, office space and parks.





In Hendricks County, the proposed Vandalia and B&O Trails, and the creation of a county-wide trail system have the potential to provide significant economic benefit to local communities. For example, as the Vandalia Trail is further developed, paved, and linked to other communities, trailheads, such as those at Coatesville and Amo, will provide opportunities for local businesses to serve trail users. The equestrian trail, in particular, has the potential to attract trail users who are willing to travel to locations that support their recreation activity.

The county may also see additional revenues and development associated with Sodalis Nature Park. Located on property set aside as bat habitat for the endangered *Myotis sodalis* bat, the opening of the park brings new use to land that was previously not available to the public. New revenue and business opportunities may be generated as the park attracts visitors from within and outside the county.

As the park and trail systems are developed and linked, local communities may attract more overnight visitors, particularly if the county promotes multi-day recreation and travel itineraries. A current untapped demand for lodging is the desire for additional camping opportunities expressed by county residents. Camping sites that accommodate the needs of trail users could encourage more frequent and longer visits, while meeting a county recreation demand and generating revenue.

### Property Values

Studies have found that homeowners are willing to pay a premium to live in close proximity to protected open space. A 2010 study on "The Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania" determined that existing open space adds to the overall value of housing stock. Homes as far as one mile away from protected open space captured a measurable increase in their value as a result of this proximity. According to the report, "This increased wealth is captured by citizens through higher sales values of homes near protected open space, and also generates increased government revenues via larger property tax collections and transfer taxes at time of sale."

Other studies have drawn similar conclusion:

- In a 2001 survey conducted for the National Association of Realtors by Public Opinion Strategies, 50 percent of respondents said they would be willing to pay 10 percent more for a house located near a park or other protected open space.

- In the same survey, 57 percent of respondents said that if they were in the market to buy a new home, they would be more likely to select one neighborhood over another if it was close to parks and open space.
- In his review of 25 studies, John L. Crompton, a professor at Texas A&M University found that "The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity."
- A Rails to Trails Conservancy report noted that a 2002 survey of recent home buyers sponsored by the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders, trails ranked as the second most important community amenity out of a list of 18 choices.
- The Rails to Trails Conservancy also reported that developers of a housing development in Apex, North Carolina added \$5,000 to the price of 40 homes adjacent to the regional greenway. The developers found that these homes were the first to sell.

It should be noted that research indicates an increase in property values is obtained when the park and/or trail is well-maintained and perceived as safe and inviting. Amenities seen as unkempt or unsafe can have a negative impact on property values.

To date, it is not likely that HCPR amenities have had significant impact on property values of nearby homes. The limited residential development adjacent to McCloud Nature Park provides little opportunity to realize increased property values. However, given its location in fast-growing Washington Township, W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park could have a significant impact on the value of nearby future and existing residential development. As the park is developed, monitoring of property values in the area will help the department to determine any impact on property values the park may have.

As the county's trail systems develop and interconnect, it is anticipated that property values among the trail corridors may increase. Again, the department should assess any trail related premiums that occur by monitoring property values along the trail corridors.



## Tourism

According to a 2009 study prepared for the Hendricks County Convention and Tourism Bureau, the tourism and travel industry contributed nearly \$192.3 million to Hendricks County's economy in 2009.

That same study also noted that the tourism industry generated nearly \$45.9 million in tax revenues to government - \$16.6 million to the state, \$9.0 million locally, and \$20.3 million to the federal government.

"Economic benefits begin when a traveler to Hendricks County, either an Indiana resident or an out-of-state visitor, spends money in the county. The typical purchases of visitors include goods and services such as lodging, food and beverages, gasoline, souvenirs, admission fees, entertainment, or other retail goods..... The individuals and businesses receiving these monies, in turn, spend them on goods, services, and taxes." This process is repeated through several rounds of spending causing a multiplier effect.

Parks and trails can contribute to increases in tourism dollars by offering opportunities that attract visitors to the county or encourage them to stay longer. The National Park Service (NPS) has found that outdoor recreation and leisure expenditures account for a substantial part of tourist's discretionary spending. They also found that greenways are often major tourist attractions generating expenditures on lodging, food and recreation-oriented services and improving the overall appeal of a community to tourists and new residents.

Calculating the economic impact on tourism of a park system requires calculating the number of park tourists and estimating their spending. At this time, HCPR has little hard data on the origin of visitors to McCloud Nature Park. However, on a regular basis, park staff encounters visitors from Putnam and Boone County as well as Indianapolis and Hamilton County, indicating that HCPR attracts visitors from outside the county.

As HCPR continues to grow, a survey of park and trail visitors will help to determine the impact the system has on bringing tourism dollars to Hendricks County. However, using past Hendricks County tourism research, and projecting potential increases in tourism provides some indication as to the levels of revenue that could be generated by the park system.

The Hendricks County Convention and Visitor Bureau reported that in 2009 Hendricks County had 1.96 million destination visitors who had direct expenditures

of \$136.6 million (or \$63 per visitor). If HCPR amenities were to help increase the number of destination visitors by 10,000, county businesses would experience an additional \$630,000 in direct revenue.

The county's proposed Vandalia and B&O Trail Systems in particular have the potential to attract large numbers of visitors as they are expanded. For example, the Cardinal Greenway, an Indiana rail to trail corridor of approximately 51 miles, links to a number of communities of various sizes, and has 250,000 users each year. Key to reaching this potential will be realizing additional miles of linked trail within the county. Ron Carter, director of The Greenways Foundation in Indianapolis made the following comment in an interview with the Richmond Palladium Item, "Without question, the longer a trail becomes the more important that trail is as a tourist draw."

Other observations about the departments potential influence on tourism include:

- Interconnecting the trail system to systems outside of the county via the Vandalia Trail and the B&O Trail will provide an important new way for visitors to encounter Hendricks County.
- As regional parks, McCloud Nature Park and So-dalis Nature Park can be expected to draw visitors from outside the county. With marketing aimed at audiences outside of the county, the draw of these parks can be anticipated to increase as additional park amenities and programs are added.
- HCPR facilities can be included in county tourism itineraries that suggest activities for families or other groups who visit the county.

## Tax Revenue

The financial impact of parks and trail systems, includes not only the cost of the park system in terms of expenditures, but also how the park system indirectly contributes to the tax revenue stream. When parks and trails increase property values, spur development, and increase tourism, corresponding increases in tax revenues for property taxes, innkeepers tax and sales tax occur.

In order to determine the tax revenue the HCPR system generates, as new amenities are added in the next five years, additional data will be needed on: park and trail visitation; property values of homes and businesses near department amenities; and economic development that may be spurred by department improvements.



**In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.**  
**Aristotle**

# Appendix A: Public Meeting Documentation

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## Public Meeting Press Release

The press release was distributed to two Hendricks County Newspapers, the Hendricks County Flyer and The Ledger. News articles resulting from the press release follow.

### County Park Board Looks Towards Future

The Hendricks County Park Board is inviting the public to attend upcoming meetings that will help map out future development for the county park system. The first meeting is scheduled for 6 pm, Thursday, August 12, at the Hendricks County Government Center (located at 355 S. Washington Street in Danville). The second meeting will be held 6 pm, Tuesday, August 17, at the Plainfield Public Library (1120 Stafford Rd. in Plainfield, Indiana).

The meetings are part of the county park board's comprehensive master plan process, which will result in a plan that will prioritize future park and program development needs within the community.

The County Park Board was created by the Hendricks County Commissioners ten years ago to help provide resources to maintain the quality of life and help improve the economic vitality of the county. The intense rate of growth experienced by the county over the past twenty years has resulted in a deficiency in publicly accessible open space and public programming.

In its ten years of existence, the county park board has opened McCloud Nature Park, is preparing to open Sodalis Nature Park, acquired a third property (which at a future time will become W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park), and maintains a section of the Vandalia Trail between Amo and Coatesville. Additionally, HCP&R provides programs to thousands of people at McCloud Nature Park, in local schools, and throughout the community.

For more information about Hendricks County Parks, visit [www.hendrickscountyparks.org](http://www.hendrickscountyparks.org) or call 317-718-6188.



August 5, 2010 Newspaper Announcement

# The Republican

your community

your newspaper

50¢

Volume 129, Number 31

Thursday, August 5, 2010

Published Weekly • Danville, Indiana

## Future of Parks

Nature parks, sports parks, dog parks. Walking trails, biking trails, equestrian trails. What types of parks and park activities would you like to see in Hendricks County's future? The Hendricks County Park Board is inviting interested citizens to attend upcoming meetings that will help map out the future development of the county park system. The meetings are part of the county park board's comprehensive master plan process, which will result in a plan that will prioritize future park and program development needs within the community.

### *Hendricks County's First Park*



Opening in 2003, McCloud Nature Park was the first park created and maintained by the Hendricks County Park Board. Today, a second nature park, Sodalís, is preparing to open, and a third property has been acquired. Public input on the future of a county park system will be gathered at two upcoming meetings, on Aug. 12 and Aug. 17.

The first meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m., Thursday August 12 at the Hendricks County Government Center (located at 355 S. Washington Street in Danville).

The second meeting will be at 6 p.m., on Tuesday, August 17 at the Plainfield Public Library (1120 Stafford Rd. Plainfield.)

The County Park Board was created by the Hendricks County Commissioners ten years ago to help provide resources to maintain the quality of life and help improve the economic vitality of the county. The intense rate of growth experienced by the county over the past twenty years has resulted in a deficiency in publically accessible open space and public programming.

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For more information about Hendricks County Parks, visit [www.hendrickscountyparks.org](http://www.hendrickscountyparks.org) or call 317-718-6188





Saturday, August 14, 2010

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BUSINESS | PAGE B8

**FINAL FAIR RESULTS**  
4-H PROJECTS LISTED



SPECIAL SECTION

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# HENDRICKS COUNTY FLYER

## County Park Board seeks public input

The Hendricks County Park Board invites all in the community to attend a meeting that will map future development for the county park system.

The meeting is 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library, 1120 Stafford Road. It's part of the park board's comprehensive master plan process, which will result in a plan

that prioritizes future park and program development needs within the community.

The county park board was created by the Hendricks County Commissioners 10 years ago to help provide resources to maintain quality of life and help improve the economic vitality of the county. The intense rate of growth

experienced by the county over the past 20 years has resulted in a deficiency in publicly-accessible open space and public programming.

In its 10 years, the county park board has opened McCloud Nature Park, is preparing to open Sodalis Nature Park, acquired a third property (which will be W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park), and maintains a sec-

tion of the Vandalia Trail between Amo and Coatesville. Additionally, Hendricks County Parks and Recreation provides programs to thousands of people at McCloud Nature Park, in local schools, and throughout the community.

For more information, call 718-6188 or visit the website at [www.hendrickscountyparks.org](http://www.hendrickscountyparks.org).



**Public Meeting Sign In: Hendricks County Government Center, August 12, 2010**

**HENDRICKS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
MASTER PLAN**

**PUBLIC MEETING** August 12th, 6:00 p.m.

Please include your NAME and WHERE YOU RESIDE IN COUNTY (Example: Jane Doe, Plainfield, or John Doe, rural Hendricks County)

Paul Miner, Ligon  
Bobby Baskley, Danville  
Greg Midgley, Avon  
Rae Bockstaller, Danville  
Robert Niemeyer, North Salem  
Ray Benson, Camby  
Dick Diets, Claydon  
Henry Merrill, Avon  
Mervyn Miller  
Bob Gentry  
Jim Rinehart



Public Meeting Sign In: Plainfield Public Library, August 17, 2010

HENDRICKS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION  
MASTER PLAN

**PUBLIC MEETING** August 17, 2010

Please include your NAME and WHERE YOU RESIDE IN COUNTY (Example: Jane Doe, Plainfield, or John Doe, rural Hendricks County)

DAN BURGER - PLAINFIELD - LIBERTY TWP.  
Merv Brenthauer - Airport  
JACK MCGRIFIN - Plainfield - Guilford Twp.  
LARISSA HAYS PLAINFIELD  
Al Bennett Plainfield, IAA  
Timothy Calahan Avon Washington Township  
Mary Walitz-Dooley Plainfield Guilford Twp  
Laura Day Plainfield Guilford Township



February 17, 2011 Public Meeting, Newspaper Announcement

Wednesday, February 9, 2011

## TOASTMASTERS

CLUB GETS START IN BROWNSBURG  
PAGE A3

## WAKE UP CALL

YOUNG MOTHER HAS HEART ATTACK  
WELLNESS | PAGE A4

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1965 | VOL. 46 - ISSUE 12 | 50 CENTS | [WWW.FLYERGROUP.COM](http://WWW.FLYERGROUP.COM)

# HENDRICKS COUNTY FLYER

HENDRICKS  
COUNTY



PARKS &  
RECREATION

## Park Board Comprehensive Plan Open for Public Review

The Hendricks County Park Board invites all members of the community to attend a public meeting to review the final draft of the 2011 – 2015 county parks and recreation master plan. The plan, when adopted will map out the development priorities for the county parks department over the next five years. The public meeting will be in open house format from 5:30pm to 7pm, Thursday February 17th at the Hendricks County Government Center (located at 355 S. Washington Street in Danville).

The plan will also be available for public review and comment at each public library in Hendricks County and at McCloud Nature Park from February 11th – 25th. Copies of the comprehensive plan will be held at the resource desk at each library.

The County Park Board was created by the Hendricks County Commissioners eleven years ago to help provide resources to maintain the quality of life and help improve the economic vitality of the county. The intense rate of growth experienced by the county over the past twenty years has resulted in a deficiency in publically accessible open space and public programming.

In it's ten years of existence, the county park board has opened McCloud Nature Park, is preparing to open Sodalis Nature Park, acquired a third property (which at a future time will become W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park), and maintains a section of the Vandalia Trail between Amo and Coatesville.

Additionally, HCP&R provides programs to thousands of people at McCloud Nature Park, in local schools, and throughout the community.

For more information about Hendricks County Parks, visit [www.hendrickscountyparks.org](http://www.hendrickscountyparks.org) or call 317-718-6188.



Established 1847

# The Republican

your community

your newspaper

50¢

Volume 130, Number 6

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Published Weekly ♦ Danville, Indiana

February 17, 2011 Public Meeting, Newspaper Announcement

## County Park Master Plan

The community is invited to attend a public meeting of the Hendricks County Park Board to review the final draft of the 2011-2015 County Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The meeting will be in an open house format, from 5:30 to 7 p.m., Thursday, February 17, at the Hendricks County Government Center, 355 S. Washington, in Danville.

The plan will also be available for public review and comment at the resource desk of each public library in Hendricks County, and at McCloud Nature Park, from February 11 - 25.

"The Master Plan is a road map for the Parks Board to follow in the next five to ten years, so we may continue to provide excellent, efficient resources that make our community truly great," said Board member Gary Emsweller. "The Master Plan is a necessary tool to keep the Board focused on issues that impact economic development, tourism, and quality of life issues facing Hendricks County today, and in the future."

The County Park Board was created by the Hendricks County Commissioners 11 years ago, to help provide resources to maintain the quality of life and help improve the economic vitality of the county. The intense rate of growth experienced by the county over the past 20 years has resulted in a deficiency in publicly accessible open space and public programming.

In its ten years of existence, the county park board has opened McCloud Nature Park, is preparing to open Sodalís Nature Park, acquired a third property (which at a future time will become W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park), and maintains a section of the Vandalia Trail between Amo and Coatesville. It also provides programs to thousands of people at McCloud Nature

HENDRICKS COUNTY



PARKS & RECREATION

Park, in local schools, and throughout the community.

Citizen participation in the formation of earlier Master Plans has been important, according to Emsweller. "Without a citizen-developed Master Plan, the acquisition and development of McCloud and Sodalís Nature Parks and thousands of family-oriented programs held by HCP&R over the past ten years would not have been possible."

For more information about Hendricks County Parks, visit [www.hendrickscountyparks.org](http://www.hendrickscountyparks.org) or call (317) 718-6188.









## February 17, 2011 Public Review, Website Announcement

# Hendricks County Parks & Recreation

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McCloudPark

About/Location

Nature Center

Activities

Vandalia Trail

Programs

Kids' Zone

Educators

Scouts

Event Calendar

About Us

Mailing List

Get Involved

Links



Ride Hendricks  
County



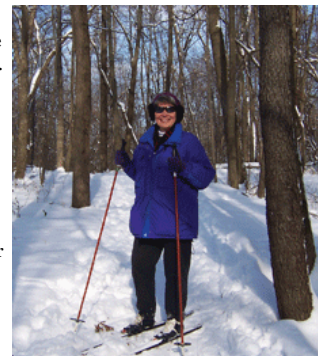
Click Image to Learn  
More

## Welcome to Hendricks County Parks!

Here you will find all you want to know about McCloud Nature Park, the Vandalia Trail, and our department's happenings and developments. We hope you'll visit us at the fun events we either host or take part in across the county. We're always "into" something - as you'll see on our Event Calendar - and we want you in on it, too! New programs are continuously being developed and we often partner with other organizations. Be sure to get on our mailing list so you can be kept up-to-date with our Explorer newsletter/magazine and our monthly e-newsletter.

### HCP&R Draft Master Plan Open for Review

The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation 2011 - 2015 comprehensive master plan draft is open for public review. The review period is open Feb. 12th - 25th. Click [Review Plan](#) to see what the future may hold for HCP&R, comments and feedback are encouraged!



## What's going on at Hendricks County Parks?

### Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser March 5th 8:00am - 2:00pm



*Look here to learn more.*



*Look here to learn more.*

This is the challenge you and your  
5-best running buddies have been  
waiting for!



*Look here to learn more.*



Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Main Office  
P.O. Box 463 · 955 E. Main · Danville · Indiana 46122  
Phone · (317) 718-6188 Fax · (317) 718-6190  
Email · [hcparks@hcparks.net](mailto:hcparks@hcparks.net)

Web page last updated: February 12, 2011

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## February 17, 2011 Public Review, Website Announcement



# Hendricks County Parks & Recreation

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  - Scouts
- Event Calendar
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- Mailing List
- Get Involved
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  -  Find us on Facebook

### HCP&R 2011-2015 Draft Master Plan Review

Below is a copy of the Hendricks County Park and Recreation Board's 2011 - 2015 Draft Comprehensive Master Plan. Due to file size, the document has been broken up into six sections. Please feel free to review the document, any comments and feedback may be sent to: [hcparks@hcparks.net](mailto:hcparks@hcparks.net). The public review period will be open February 12th - 25th

- [Executive Summary \(PDF\)](#)
- [Purpose & Demographics \(PDF\)](#)
- [Demographics \(continued\) Local Environment & Administrative Review \(PDF\)](#)
- [ADA Compliance, Facility & Resource Review \(PDF\)](#)
- [Community Input \(PDF\)](#)
- [Needs Analysis, Action Plan & Administrative Review \(PDF\)](#)

Thank you for reviewing the draft version of the 2011 - 2015 Hendricks County Parks & Recreation comprehensive master plan. We welcome your feedback.



**Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Main Office**  
1 P. P. CoBx46 3: 99 EP5 ain 3Marv10 3Indiana x4122  
Phone 3(617) 718-4188 Fax 3(617) 718-41: 0  
Email [D3hcparks@hcparks.net](mailto:D3hcparks@hcparks.net)

Web page last updated: February 12, 2011

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Public Meeting Sign In: Hendricks County Government Building, February 17, 2011

**Hendricks County, Indiana  
PARK AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

February 17, 2011 Public Meeting

Name	Affiliation
Derek Phillips	resident
Paul Miner	park board member
Gary T Emsweller	park board member
HENRY S. MERRILL	resident
Betty Bartley	press
Nancy Johnson	County Council
Dick Dietz	resident



# Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Survey

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## Welcome

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On behalf of Hendricks County Parks and Recreation, thank you for participating in this survey about the park and recreation resources in your community. This survey is being administered by the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University and will aid in the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for your county. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be anonymous.

If you were assigned an access code, you will enter it on the next screen. It will not be associated with your contact information or your responses. Responses will be kept secure at the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands. Individual responses will never be attributed to an identified individual. The Eppley Institute will compile all responses and provide a report of the results to Hendricks County.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the Eppley Institute at [eppley@eppley.org](mailto:eppley@eppley.org) or (812) 855-3095.

Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands  
501 N. Morton St., Suite 101  
Bloomington, IN 47404

### PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may refuse to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

The Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University is a nationally recognized institute that provides research, technical assistance, consultative services, training and education, and planning to parks, recreation and public land agencies. As a unit of the Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies Department at Indiana University, the oldest department of its type in the nation, the Eppley Institute brings the best balance of practical and academic solutions to our partners, along with the credibility and resources of a research-intensive university.





## Access Code

1. Were you provided an access code for this survey? (Required)

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not Sure

If you were provided an access code, please enter it below.  
(Include dashes, e.g. 999-999-999)

Please proceed to Question #2.

2. The Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department (HCP&R) serves all communities and townships within Hendricks County. In the past 12 months, how often have you visited a park run by HCP&R or attended a program hosted by HCP&R?

- ☐ Daily  
☐ A few times a week  
☐ A few times a month  
☐ A few times a year  
☐ Never  
☐ I wasn't aware there was a Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department; or, I'm not sure if it was a HCP&R event.

3. Several other parks and recreation departments in and around Hendricks County are listed below. For each, please indicate how often you have visited a park or attended a program run by them in the last 12 months.

	Daily	A few times per week	A few times per month	A few times per year	Never	Don't know/ Wasn't aware of department
Avon Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brownsburg Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Washington Township Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guilford Township Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pittsboro Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Danville Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plainfield Parks & Recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indy Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indiana State Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



4. Below is a list of facilities and services that a parks and recreation department may provide.

Consider the five (5) that you think are most important to the community of Hendricks County and rank them in order of importance, with '1' being most important and '5' being 5th most important. Then consider the five (5) that are most important to you personally and rank them in order of importance, as well.

Please choose exactly five (5) items for Important to Community and exactly five (5) for Important to Me. Leave all other fields blank.

	Important to Community	Important to Me
Family aquatics/water park		
Additional land set aside for recreation		
Additional land set aside for environmental protection		
Additional nature centers and visitor centers		
Programs and events about local history and culture		
Programs and events about nature and science		
Programs and events about health and wellness		
Additional trails (nature)		
Additional trails (linking community resources)		
Indoor event/meeting space for rent		
Outdoor event/meeting space for rent		
Camping		
Programs and events for children		
Programs and events for teens		
Programs and events for adults		
Programs and events for senior citizens		
Outdoor athletic/sports fields		



	Important to Community	Important to Me
Fitness centers		
Picnic areas		
Fishing areas		
Other (see 'A' below)		
Other (see 'B' below)		

	Brief description
Specify Other 'A' (if applicable)	
Specify Other 'B' (if applicable)	

5. In the past 12 months, have you visited McCloud Nature Park (located near North Salem)?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not sure

6. Please indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following aspects of McCloud Nature Park.

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/NA
Nature Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picnic shelters/areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistance from staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programs/activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



7. Consider the following programs and services offered by some park and recreation agencies.

In some cases such programs and services are provided for free (i.e., the cost is borne by the agency). In other cases, user fees are charged to cover or offset their cost.

For each item below, please indicate if you believe they should be provided at the cost of the user, the agency, or shared between the two.

	No fee charged to participants/ users (Agency covers cost)	Cost shared between users and agency	User fee charged (Agency recovers cost)
Interpretation or education programs for the PUBLIC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education programs for SCHOOL GROUPS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education programs for SPECIAL GROUPS (e.g., scouts, civic organizations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admission to a city or county park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admission to a nature center or museum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Admission to a swimming pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park shelter/ pavilion use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of athletic equipment or sporting goods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletic events (e.g., 5K fun run)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special events (e.g., festivals, fairs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of campground with facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of campground without facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



8. Below is a list of benefits that parks and recreation facilities and programs may provide. Consider the three (3) that you think are most important and rank them 1-3, with '1' being most important and '3' being 3rd most important.

Please choose exactly three (3) items and leave all other fields blank.

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Enhanced quality of life                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enhanced personal health                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enhanced economic health of community                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enhanced environmental health (e.g., clean air and water) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enhanced sense of community                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enhanced aesthetic appeal of community                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Enhanced tourism to community                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. As Hendricks County grows, there will likely be an increasing demand for the facilities and services provided by HCP&R. How should the county fund these new demands? Please consider each of these five alternatives and rank your order of preference using 1-5, with '1' being most preferred and '5' being least preferred.

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| By passing a general obligation bond  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By charging fees for programs and events  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By increasing the appropriation HCP&R receives from the general fund (i.e., property taxes) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By developing facilities that can generate revenue  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By charging impact fees (i.e., fees associated with new developments)                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. Pretend you are a County Official with an additional \$100 available to spend on the Hendricks County parks system. It is your decision on how to spend it. How would you distribute the funds among the categories below?

Your total must equal \$100 before proceeding.

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Improvements to and maintenance of existing facilities                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Acquisition of new park land and open space                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Development of additional recreation programs and services for YOUTH    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Development of additional recreation programs and services for ADULTS   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Development of additional recreation programs and services for FAMILIES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Development of additional recreation programs and services for SENIORS  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Organize more community events  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Acquisition and development of new walking and biking trails            |





11. How do you prefer to receive information about parks and recreation programs, events, and facilities? Consider your three (3) most preferred methods and rank them 1-3, with '1' being most important and '3' being 3rd most important.

Please choose exactly three (3) items and leave all other fields blank.

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Organization's newsletter (e.g., the HCP&R Explorer) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E-mail   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Organization's website                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social networking updates (e.g., Facebook)           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Newspaper  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Calling organization's office                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please specify.)                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. Are there developments or programs that HCP&R is pursuing that you feel are not important?

13. Are there developments or programs that HCP&R has not yet pursued that are important to you?

14. What is the 5-digit zip code of your household?

15. Please indicate the age of ALL INDIVIDUALS in your household. Indicate the number of individuals for each age category. Select one response for each individual.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 0-2                  | <input type="text"/> |
| 3-5                  | <input type="text"/> |
| 7-10                 | <input type="text"/> |
| 11-13                | <input type="text"/> |
| 14-18                | <input type="text"/> |
| 19-25                | <input type="text"/> |
| 26-50                | <input type="text"/> |
| 51-70                | <input type="text"/> |
| 71 and over          | <input type="text"/> |
| Prefer not to answer | <input type="text"/> |



16. Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

17. If you would like to be contacted about volunteering for Hendricks County Parks and Recreation, please provide your contact information below. This information will not be associated with your survey responses.

First Name

Last Name

Street Address

Apt/Suite/Office

City

State

Postal Code

Email Address

Phone Number

Mobile Phone

You may also contact Hendricks County Parks and Recreation at (317) 718-6188 for volunteer information.