



**Hendricks County Parks & Recreation
Comprehensive Master Plan
2021-2025**



Hendricks County Parks & Recreation

Comprehensive Master Plan

2021-2025

April 9, 2021

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation

P.O. Box 463
955 E. Main Street
Danville, IN 46122
(317) 718-6188
hcparks@hcparks.net
HendricksCountyParks.org

Ryan Lemley, Superintendent

Hendricks County Park Board

Mike Hayden, President
Brad Eisenhart, Vice President
Matt Freije, Secretary
Bill DuMond
Gary Emsweller
Paul Miner
Jeff Pell

Cover Image

Dave Novak

Prepared by

Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent

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Resolution Adopting the Comprehensive Master Plan

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

WHEREAS, the Hendricks County Park Board wishes to provide aesthetic and functional facilities and programs to the residents of Hendricks County, Indiana, to meet their needs; and,

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

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

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Hendricks County Park Board, by unanimous declaration, does adopt the Hendricks County Parks & Recreation 2021-2025 Comprehensive Master Plan as its official plan for the growth and development of parks and recreation opportunities in Hendricks County, Indiana, for the next five (5) years. The Hendricks County Park Board is committed to an annual review and update of the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Master Plan.

Approved and signed this _____ day of _____, 2021.

HENDRICKS COUNTY PARK BOARD

Mike Hayden, President

Matt Freije, Secretary



Assurance of Accessibility Compliance with:
Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (as amended);
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as
amended);
and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of
1990 (as amended)

The Hendricks County Park Board has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (as amended), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (as amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

Approved and signed this _____ day of _____, 2021.

HENDRICKS COUNTY PARK BOARD

Mike Hayden, President

Matt Freije, Secretary



Greg Beilfuss - Chief Planner
IDNR – State Parks
402 W. Washington St., W298
Indianapolis, IN 42204-2782
(317) 232-4071

April 19th, 2021

Mike Hayden
Hendricks County Park Board
PO BOX 463
955 E. Main St.
Danville, IN 46122

Dear Mike,

The DNR Division of State Parks planning staff has reviewed the final draft of the 2021-2026 Hendricks County Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The plan meets the Department of Natural Resources' minimum requirements for local parks and recreation master plans. This letter certifies that your community **is eligible to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants through this office in the 2021 grant year.** A new plan will be due on January 15th, 2027 at which time your current LWCF grant application eligibility will expire.

If you haven't already, we strongly recommend that you contact Mr. Bob Bronson, our grant section chief, as soon as possible about future grant applications. Bob and his staff can assist in your grant application process. He can be reached by phone at: (317) 232-4075 or by e-mail at: bbronson@dnr.IN.gov.

We support your planning efforts and encourage your participation in the grant programs administered by the Division of State Parks. If you require further information regarding planning, do not hesitate to call me at: (317) 232-4071 or by e-mail at: gbeilfuss@dnr.IN.gov.

Sincerely,

Greg Beilfuss
Chief Planner - IDNR Division of Outdoor Recreation

ECC – Eric Ivie, Asst. Supt., Hendricks County Parks



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Introduction

Contact Information

This Comprehensive Master Plan, encompassing the years of 2021 through 2025, is for Hendricks County Parks & Recreation (HCP&R).

This plan was written by Assistant Superintendent Eric Ivie throughout 2020 and the first three months of 2021 with oversight from Superintendent Ryan Lemley and the Hendricks County Park Board.

HCP&R's main office is located at:

955 E. Main Street
Danville, IN 46122
(317) 718-6188
hcparks@hcparks.net
HendricksCountyParks.org

The department's mailing address is:

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation
P.O. Box 463
Danville, IN 46122

Definition of the Planning Area

The planning area for this document is all of Hendricks County, Indiana.

However, while HCP&R primarily serves the citizens of Hendricks County, its service area does not stop at county borders.

The location of McCloud Nature Park attracts park guests from Putnam and Boone Counties, and the section of the Vandalia Trail operated by HCP&R takes trail users to the Hendricks-Putnam County Line, where it connects with People Pathways and runs all the way to Greencastle, Indiana.

HCP&R anticipates that the location of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park will attract visitors from all over the state, especially Morgan and Marion Counties.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Hendricks County Park Board

The Hendricks County Park Board was established in 2000 under Indiana Code 36-10-3.

Seven (7) members of the community serve on the Hendricks County Park Board as unpaid volunteers. Two (2) positions are appointed by the Hendricks County Council, two (2) positions are appointed by the presiding judge of the Hendricks Circuit Court, one (1) position is appointed by the Hendricks County Commissioners, one (1) position is appointed by the Hendricks County Soil & Water Conservation District, and one (1) position is appointed by the Purdue University Extension Office in Hendricks County.

The two (2) appointments by the Hendricks County Council may not be from the same political party.

The two (2) appointments by the Hendricks Circuit Court Judge may not be from the same political party.

Park Board members serve staggered four-year terms beginning on the first Tuesday of January (unless filling the remainder of an unexpired term) and ending on the first Monday of January at the end of the designated term.

The appointments by the Hendricks County Soil & Water Conservation District and Purdue Extension are *ex officio* (by virtue of holding positions within their appointing bodies).

Hendricks County Park Board - 2021			
Board Member	Office	Appointed By	Term Ends
Mike Hayden (R)	President	County Commissioners	2022
Brad Eisenhart (R)	Vice President	County Council	2022
Matt Freije (D)	Secretary	Circuit Court	2023
Bill DuMond (D)		County Council	2024
Gary Emsweller (R)		Circuit Court	2025
Paul Miner (R)		Soil & Water Conservation	<i>Ex officio</i>
Jeff Pell (N)		Purdue Extension	<i>Ex officio</i>

(R) = Republican

(D) = Democrat

(N) = No political affiliation

The Hendricks County Park Board generally meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. in the main office building located at 955 E. Main Street in Danville, Indiana. Dates and meeting locations are subject to change. Members of the public are always welcome to attend the meetings.

All Park Board members may be reached by mail at: P.O. Box 463, Danville, IN 46122.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Department

Staff

The department's superintendent is Ryan Lemley, who joined the staff on February 11, 2019, becoming HCP&R's fourth superintendent in its history.

Prior to Lemley's tenure with the department, Eric Ivie served as interim superintendent from July of 2018 through February 10, 2019.

Jeremy Weber served as superintendent from June of 2016 until July of 2018.

William Roche served as the department's first superintendent from July of 2006 until January of 2016. There was no superintendent in place between January and June of 2016.

HCP&R employs six (6) full-time staff members and six (6) part-time staff members. Additionally, up to four (4) part-time seasonal employees are hired during the summer and autumn months of each year.

The full-time positions are: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Park Manager, Maintenance Supervisor, Park Naturalist, and Assistant Park Naturalist.

The part-time positions are: three (3) maintenance technicians, two (2) assistant naturalists, and one (1) administrative assistant at the main office.



HCP&R Superintendent Ryan Lemley

Seasonal part-time staff are divided among the maintenance crew and the naturalists, depending on need in any given year. In the summer of 2020, two (2) seasonal part-time positions were on the maintenance crew, and two (2) were on the naturalist staff.

Volunteers

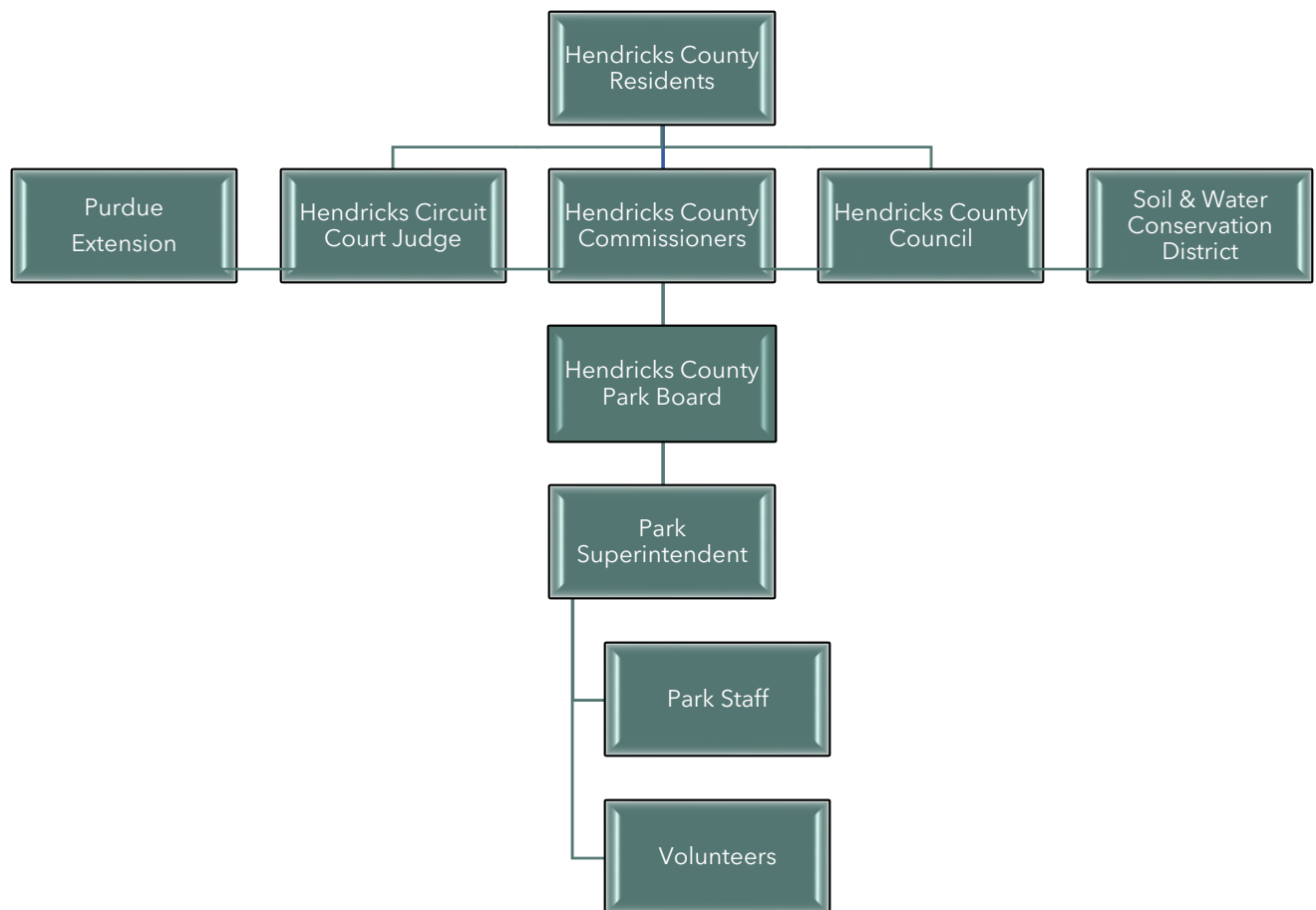
HCP&R relies on a large group of volunteers who assist staff with programs, operations, special events, clerical tasks, landscaping, and more. Without this crucial component of our department, HCP&R would not be able to provide the high-quality programming and special events at our properties that park patrons have come to enjoy.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

A group of about 50 volunteers is managed by HCP&R's Park Naturalist, Sarah Wolf. For more information about how to volunteer with Hendricks County Parks & Recreation, please contact Sarah Wolf at volunteer@hcparks.net or at (765) 676-5437.

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Organizational Chart





5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Locations

In addition to its main office, HCP&R operates McCloud Nature Park, located outside of North Salem, Indiana. Its contact information is:

8518 Hughes Road
North Salem, IN 46165
(765) 676-5437
mccloudnp@hcparks.net

HCP&R also operates the western portion of the Vandalia Trail, which runs from Amo, Indiana, west through Coatesville to the Hendricks-Putnam County Line, where it connects to People Pathways and continues to Greencastle, Indiana.

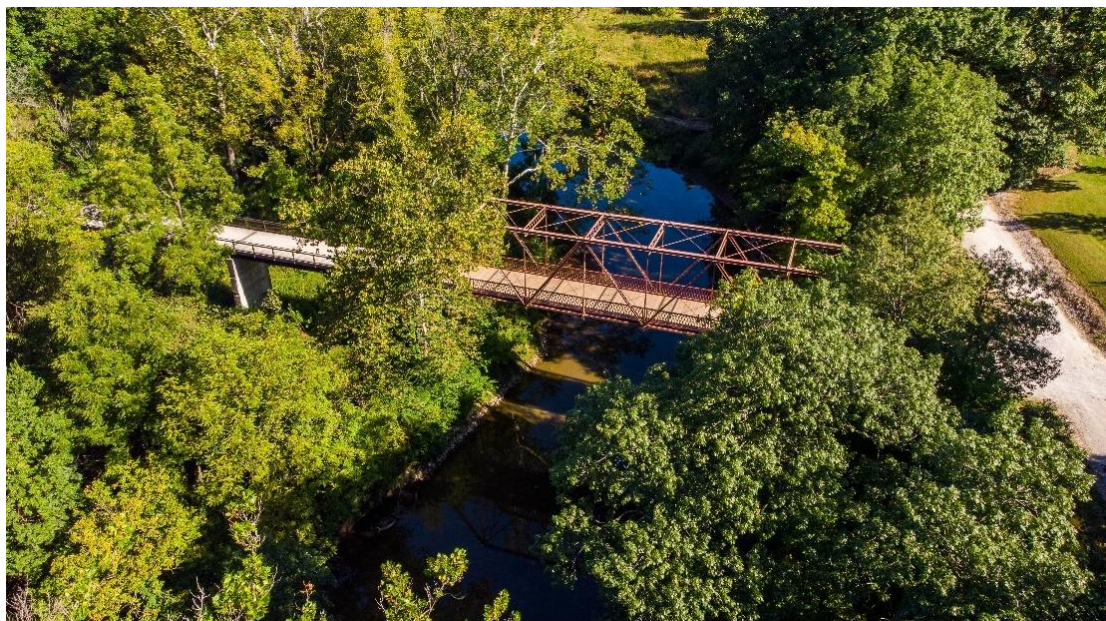
There are two trailheads located on the portion of the Vandalia Trail that is operated by HCP&R:

Amo Trailhead
5042 South Street
Amo, IN 46103

Coatesville Trailhead
7963 Main Street
Coatesville, IN 46121

Construction is underway on Phase I of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park in Avon, Indiana. This park is scheduled to open to the public in 2021, and its official address is:

4521 Gibbs Road
Danville, IN 46122



Aerial View of McCloud Nature Park. Source: Dave Novak.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Goals and Objectives

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation 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 of the Comprehensive Master Plan

Through this Comprehensive Master Plan, the Hendricks County Park Board and Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Department staff will continually strive to:

- Be a leading entity in nature-based parks and recreation management in Hendricks County.
- Promote sustainable conservation and environmental standards in parks and trails and to the community.
- Protect and preserve important natural and cultural resources as park offerings.
- Maintain, improve, and expand park property.
- Be transparent and uphold the highest ethical standards in all board and department operations.
- Provide nature-based recreation and education opportunities for everyone.
- Enhance Hendricks County's economic development, tourism, and quality of life.
- Implement practices to avoid and mitigate invasive species and to promote native trees and other vegetation, including native pollinator plants, in parks and trails.
- Build a strong network of parks and trails throughout Hendricks County for current and future generations.
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders.
- Be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us by residents of Hendricks County and from all other entities.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Revenue and Budget

HCP&R is annually funded primarily through the **Hendricks County General Fund, Food & Beverage Tax, and Innkeepers Tax.**

Hendricks County General Fund

Each year, the Hendricks County Council appropriates some of the Hendricks County General Fund to be used by HCP&R for operations. This money primarily comes from Hendricks County property taxes and income taxes.

About 40% of HCP&R's total budget is appropriated from the General Fund, and this funding covers most of the department's salaries, as well as a wide array of operations, maintenance, and programming expenses.

HCP&R Appropriations from the General Fund						
<u>Year</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Programming</u>	<u>Maintenance</u>	<u>Capital Projects</u>	<u>Total</u>
2016	\$287,485	\$93,500	\$4,000	\$19,000	\$0	\$403,985
2017	\$287,874	\$93,500	\$4,000	\$19,000	\$0	\$404,374
2018	\$356,782	\$111,300	\$4,000	\$22,000	\$0	\$494,082
2019	\$348,892	\$118,300	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$497,192
2020	\$363,166 ¹	\$118,300	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$511,466
2021	\$349,719	\$118,300	\$5,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$498,019

¹ There were 27 pay periods in 2020. Normally, there are 26 pay periods per year.

HCP&R has seen a 23.3% increase in funding from the General Fund from 2016 to 2021.

The amount of money that is allocated for HCP&R salaries has increased by approximately 21.6% from 2016 to 2021. This is primarily a result of two full-time positions being added in 2018: the Assistant Superintendent and the Assistant Park Naturalist. Both of these salaries are a combination of General Fund and Innkeepers Tax monies - the result of an agreement that former superintendent Jeremy Weber negotiated with the Hendricks County Council in 2017.

About 31% of the Assistant Superintendent's salary is paid through the General Fund, while the remaining 69% is paid through the Innkeepers Tax.

About 49% of the Assistant Park Naturalist's salary is paid through the General Fund, while the remaining 51% is paid through the Innkeepers Tax.

Appropriations from the General Fund for operations have increased by about 26.5% from 2016 to 2021, while those for maintenance (24%) and programming (25%) have also increased during the same time period.



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Food & Beverage Tax

Each year, the Hendricks County Council also appropriates some of the County's Food & Beverage Tax collections to HCP&R. This money comes from the 1% tax that Hendricks County began assessing on all food and beverage sales on August 1, 2005, pursuant to Indiana Code 6-9-35-14.

About 23.3% of HCP&R's total budget is appropriated from Food & Beverage Tax. This appropriation is divided into two budget lines: Land Acquisition and Other Park Improvements.

HCP&R Appropriations from Food & Beverage Tax			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Land Acquisition</u>	<u>Other Park Improvements</u>	<u>Total</u>
2016	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$350,000
2017	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$350,000
2018	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
2019	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
2020	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
2021	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000

Total annual appropriations from Food & Beverage Tax decreased by \$50,000 per year in 2018 when the Hendricks County Commissioners and the Hendricks County Council instructed HCP&R to develop the land that it owns already - particularly the W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park property - before purchasing more land.

HCP&R expected a significant drop in county-wide Food & Beverage Tax collections in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was expected to significantly impact funding availability significantly in 2021 and 2022. However, in a pleasant surprise, 2020 collections were actually pretty close to those in previous years, and the resulting impact was negligible.

The risk remains, however, that future public health issues similar to the COVID-19 pandemic could seriously disrupt this funding source for HCP&R.

Innkeepers Tax

Each year, the Hendricks County Council appropriates some of the County's Innkeepers Tax collections to HCP&R. This money comes from the 8% tax that Hendricks County began assessing on hotel room rentals on October 1, 2005, pursuant to Indiana Code 6-9-37-3.

About 37% of HCP&R's total budget is appropriated from Innkeepers Tax, and it is divided up into salaries, promotion of Hendricks County, and Development of County Parks.



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HCP&R Appropriations from Innkeepers Tax				
<u>Year</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Promotional County</u>	<u>Development of County Parks</u>	<u>Total</u>
2016	\$0	\$35,000	\$150,000	\$185,000
2017	\$0	\$35,000	\$150,000	\$185,000
2018	\$95,120	\$35,000	\$150,000	\$280,120
2019	\$86,842	\$35,000	\$150,000	\$271,842
2020	\$90,697	\$35,000	\$350,000	\$475,697
2021	\$87,337	\$20,000	\$250,000	\$357,337

Total annual appropriations from Innkeepers Tax for the Promotional County budget line - used primarily for the publication of *The Explorer* magazine - has remained the same from 2016 to 2020. HCP&R requested and received a reduction in this budget line in 2021 due to changes made to the quantity of magazines that are now published.

Annual appropriations to Development of County Parks remained the same from 2016 to 2019 but were increased by the Hendricks County Council in 2020 due to construction beginning on W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. HCP&R requested and received a reduction in this budget line in 2021 as Phase I construction neared completion.

No annual appropriation was made to fund salaries until 2018 when the full-time positions of Assistant Superintendent, Assistant Park Naturalist, and Maintenance Supervisor were created. Pursuant to the agreement between former superintendent Jeremy Weber and the Hendricks County Council in 2017, about 69% of the Assistant Superintendent's salary and about 51% of the Assistant Park Naturalist's salary is paid from Innkeepers Tax. The remainder of those two salaries comes from the Hendricks County General Fund.

The salary of the Maintenance Supervisor is paid entirely from Innkeepers Tax.

The amount appropriated for salaries in 2018 was a conservative estimate, based on what HCP&R thought the three new positions' pay grades would be. After the 2018 budget was approved by the Hendricks County Council, the job descriptions for all three new positions were assigned pay grades by Hendricks County Human Resources and found to be less than the 2018 budget appropriation. The appropriation for 2019 was adjusted accordingly.

HCP&R expected a significant drop in county-wide Innkeepers Tax collections in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was expected to significantly impact funding availability significantly in 2021 and 2022. However, in a pleasant surprise, 2020 collections were actually pretty close to those in previous years, and the resulting impact was negligible.

The risk remains, however, that future public health issues similar to the COVID-19 pandemic could seriously disrupt this funding source for HCP&R.



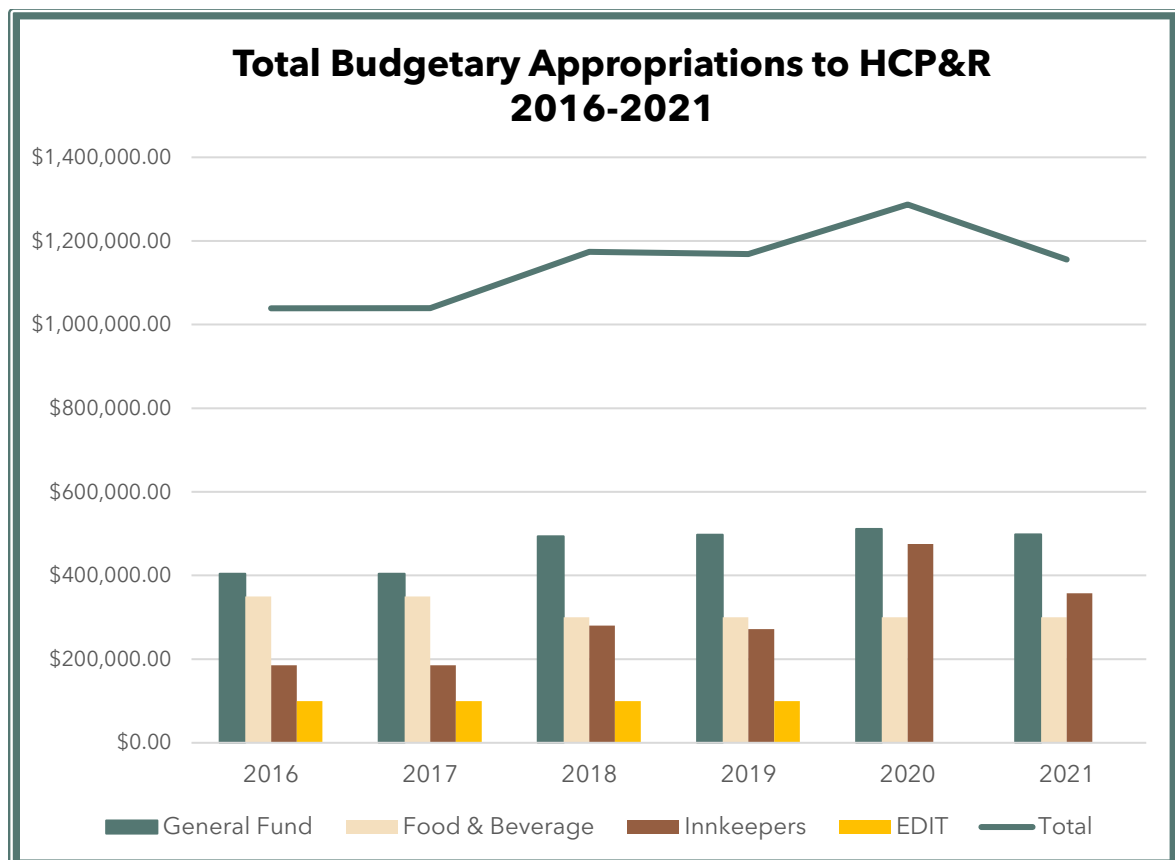
5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

EDIT Fund

From 2010 through 2019, HCP&R received \$100,000 annually from the **Economic Development Income Tax (EDIT) Fund** for payment on property that is being developed into W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. The final payment on the property purchase was made in January of 2019.

Total Annual Budget Appropriations

Total Budgetary Appropriations to HCP&R, 2016-2021					
Year	General Fund	Food & Beverage	Innkeepers	EDIT	Total
2016	\$403,985	\$350,000	\$185,000	\$100,000	\$1,038,985
2017	\$404,374	\$350,000	\$185,000	\$100,000	\$1,039,374
2018	\$494,082	\$300,000	\$280,120	\$100,000	\$1,174,202
2019	\$497,192	\$300,000	\$271,842	\$100,000	\$1,169,034
2020	\$511,466	\$300,000	\$475,697	\$0	\$1,287,163
2021	\$498,019	\$300,000	\$357,337	\$0	\$1,155,356





5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Hendricks County Community Foundation

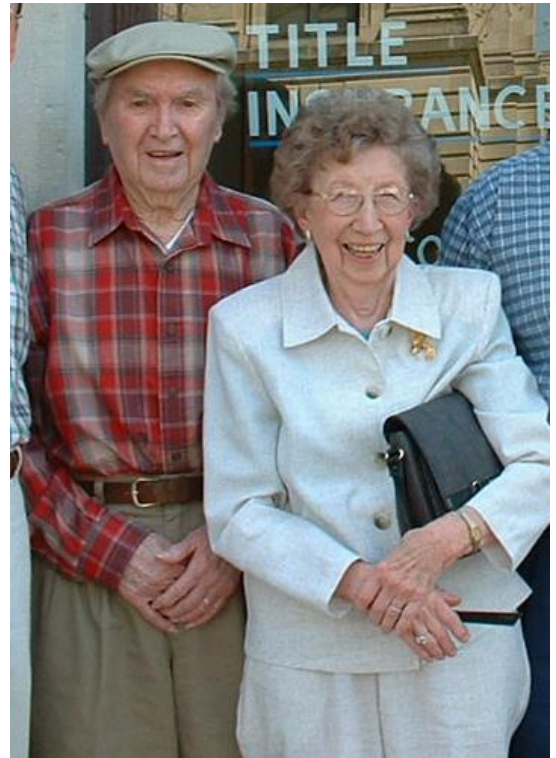
Supplementing the department's annual budget are three endowment funds held by the Hendricks County Community Foundation, all of which are comprised of private donations.

One of these endowments is the **Harlos Fund**, which totals \$421,620.00 as of January of 2021. The spendable amount of this endowment for 2021 is \$44,512.71. The Harlos Fund is specified for use on projects on the north side of McCloud Nature Park – property that HCP&R purchased from Glen and Mildred Harlos.

The second endowment is the **Gibbs Fund**, which totals \$153,779.24 as of January of 2021. The spendable amount of this endowment for 2021 is \$5,616.13. The Gibbs Fund is specified for use on projects at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

The final endowment is the **Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Fund**, which totals \$15,284.41 as of January of 2021. The spendable amount of this endowment for 2021 is \$549.25. This fund has no restrictions on its use.

Each year, the Hendricks County Park Board and the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Board of Directors, with input from the HCP&R superintendent, determine whether to spend or reinvest the annual spendable amount in each endowment.



Glen and Mildred Harlos in 2014

Parks Foundation of Hendricks County

Established in 2009 as a 501(C)(3) organization, the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) was created to provide financial assistance to HCP&R through private and corporate donations and sponsorships.

Since its inception, the PFOHC has periodically funded projects in part or in their entirety at McCloud Nature Park, Sodalis Nature Park, the Vandalia Trail, and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

In 2019, the PFOHC expanded its mission to serve all parks departments within Hendricks County.

As of December 2020, the money available to HCP&R through the PFOHC was as follows:

- \$1,908 to be used on playground equipment at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.
- \$1,291 to be used on the McCloud Arboretum
- \$9,000 to be used on the Vandalia Trail
- \$2,250 to be used on the McCloud Wetland Habitat and Observation Deck
- \$14,449 total



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Sale of Sodalis Nature Park Amenities

In 2009, HCP&R began leasing approximately 210 acres of unincorporated land in southeast Hendricks County from the Indianapolis Airport Authority and created Sodalis Nature Park (see page 44 for a more in-depth discussion). HCP&R implemented several amenities within the park, including trails, shelters, an ADA-accessible fishing dock, picnic tables, and more.

The Town of Plainfield purchased the park land as part of a larger 1,800-acre acquisition of land from the Indianapolis International Airport in 2018, and in 2019, the Town of Plainfield assumed operations of Sodalis Nature Park.

The Town purchased the amenities at Sodalis Nature Park from HCP&R for \$300,000 on the condition that the money be used toward the development of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. That money was held by the Hendricks County Auditor's Office until 2020, when about \$100,000 of it was put toward construction costs of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. The remaining \$200,000 is being saved for future expenses associated with the new park.



Sodalis Nature Park



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Features of Hendricks County

Location

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

As the third-fastest growing county in Indiana, Hendricks County has experienced substantial growth over the past 30 years. During that time, the population has increased from 75,717 in 1990 to a 2019 population of 170,311 – a 125% increase.

Between 2018 and 2019, Hendricks County increased its population by 2.0%, trailing only Hamilton County (2.3%) and Hancock County (2.2%), according to the Indiana University Business Research Center.

STATS Indiana projects Hendricks County's 2030 population to be 216,472 and the 2050 population to be 239,515.



Source: Visit Hendricks County

Townships

Hendricks County is divided into 12 townships:

- Brown
- Center
- Clay
- Eel River
- Franklin
- Guilford
- Liberty
- Lincoln
- Marion
- Middle
- Union
- Washington

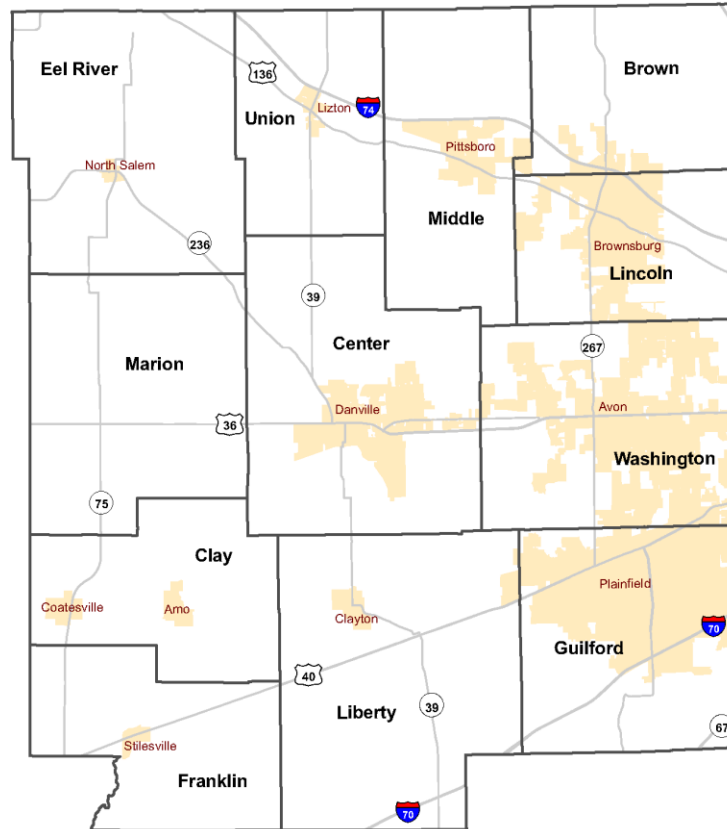
Of the major population centers in Hendricks County, Brownsburg is primarily located within Lincoln Township, Avon is primarily located within Washington Township, Plainfield is primarily located within Guilford Township, and Danville is primarily located within Center Township.

Of HCP&R's properties, McCloud Nature Park is located within Eel River Township, W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park is in Washington Township, and the Vandalia Trail is in Clay Township.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Hendricks County, Indiana Townships



Source: IBRC at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau. August 2011

Incorporated Towns and Populations

Eleven incorporated towns exist within Hendricks County, and five of them provide recreational services to their local population with varying levels of service.

The towns of Avon, Brownsburg, Danville, Pittsboro, and Plainfield each have their own parks and recreation departments. Additionally, Washington Township (Avon) and Guilford Township (Plainfield) have parks and recreation departments.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Incorporated Towns and Populations					
<u>Town</u>	<u>Population in 1990</u>	<u>Population in 2000</u>	<u>Population in 2010</u>	<u>Population in 2019</u>	<u>% change from 1990 to 2019</u>
Amo	380	414	401	530	+39.5%
Avon ¹	N/A	6,248	12,446	17,169	+174.8%
Brownsburg	7,628	14,520	21,285	25,264	+231.2%
Clayton	610	693	972	998	+63.6%
Coatesville	469	516	523	609	+29.9%
Danville	4,345	6,418	9,001	9,791	+125.3%
Lizton	410	327	488	512	+24.9%
North Salem	499	591	518	508	+1.8%
Pittsboro	815	1,588	2,928	3,298	+304.7%
Plainfield	10,433	18,396	27,631	32,045	+207.2%
Stilesville	298	261	316	261	-12.4%
Hendricks County	75,717	104,165	145,448	170,311	+124.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

¹Avon was incorporated in 1995. Population % change calculated from 2000 to 2019.

Indiana SCORP 2021-25 and Hendricks County

The 2021-25 version of the Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) outlines how the State of Indiana established Level of Service, described as follows on pages 35-36:

Level of Service (LOS) is a process of strategic planning that takes into account the unique aspects of individual communities. LOS also measures demand for recreation opportunities, current parks and recreation resources, and the needs and preferences of community residents...

... The State of Indiana...created LOS guidelines for publicly-owned parks, recreation and open space for all Hoosiers. Indiana's guidelines for outdoor recreation in terms of acres per 1,000 people are:

- Local LOS: 20 acres per 1,000 people (.02 acres per person).
- State/Federal LOS: 35 acres per 1,000 people (.035 acres per person).
- Total (Statewide) LOS: 55 acres per 1,000 people (.055 acres per person).



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Using these state guidelines for Local LOS, then, Hendricks County's current population of 170,311 means that there should be 3,406.22 acres of publicly-owned parks, recreation, and open space for the county's residents.

The same document (pg. 37) reveals that Hendricks County actually contains 1,554.72 acres of publicly-owned parks, recreation, and open space.

By state standards, Hendricks County is **1,851.50 acres short**. It would need to more than double its current park acreage to meet the minimum guidelines.

This is the fourth-largest deficit in the state, behind only Marion County (7,287.07 acres short), Hamilton County (2,422.93 acres short), and St. Joseph County (1,983.56 acres short).

Hendricks County does not contain any state or federally-owned park lands, making it one of 30 Indiana counties that is deficient in all three levels of service (pg. 48).

Finally, because Hendricks County does not meet the total LOS of 55 acres per 1,000 people and it has a population-growth rate higher than the 2014 to 2018 estimated Indiana statewide population growth rate of 1.44%, the State of Indiana has deemed Hendricks County to be one of 14 **"critical counties"** in the state (pg. 55).

Effects on HCP&R

Hendricks County has a two-pronged issue here.

First, it is already a critical county, as defined by the SCORP, at its current population and amount of park acreage. Second, that LOS deficit is going to increase exponentially if the county's population grows at its expected rate.

With STATS Indiana projecting Hendricks County's population to reach 216,472 people by 2030, the county will need 11,906 total acres of publicly-owned parks – a 667% increase from the current 1,554.72 acres.

It is unrealistic for HCP&R to approach the Hendricks County Council and request the funds required to purchase more than 10,000 acres of land over the next 10 years. It would also be very difficult to find and purchase 10,000+

CRITICAL COUNTIES BASED ON TOTAL ACRES



Source: Indiana SCORP 2021-25



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acres in Hendricks County. The entire county encompasses 408 square miles or 261,120 acres, so about 12,000 acres of publicly-owned park land would account for nearly 5% of the whole county – and that would only get Hendricks County up to the SCORP’s minimum standards in 10 years. Meanwhile, the population will likely continue to grow, requiring even more park land.

It is also not the sole responsibility of HCP&R to acquire park land in order to meet SCORP standards. There are several other parks departments in Hendricks County (see page 35) who can help – and are helping – with this task.

The effect on HCP&R of Hendricks County being a critical county is that the department should perpetually be on the lookout for suitable property for expansion. The department recognizes this and has incorporated that strategy into its Action Plan for the next 5 years. The county likely will not be able to meet or exceed SCORP standards in the near future, within the next 5 or 10 years, or quite possibly, ever. But continually working toward that goal remains of the utmost importance to HCP&R.

The People of Hendricks County

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hendricks County’s 2019 population of 170,311 makes it the 10th most populous county in Indiana, accounting for 2.5% of the state’s population of 6,732,219.

The Census Bureau predicts a 2030 population of 216,472, which would make Hendricks County the 7th most populated county in the state.

The median age of the Hendricks County population is 38.1 years, which is right on par with the median ages of Indiana (37.9) and the United States (38.4).

Population Estimates by Age, 2019		
<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Hendricks County Population</u>
Preschool (0 to 4)	9,759	6.2%
School Age (5 to 17)	32,273	17.1%
College Age (18 to 24)	13,726	9.8%
Young Adult (25 to 44)	46,220	25.5%
Older Adult (45 to 64)	44,136	25.2%
Seniors (65 and older)	24,197	16.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

According to the 2019 Census, the population of Hendricks County is predominantly White, with the Black, American Indian or Native Alaskan, Asian, and Pacific Islander populations making up just under 15% of the entire population.

The county’s population is 95.7% non-Hispanic, with 4.3% of people being Hispanic.



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Population Estimates by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2019			
<u>Race</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Hendricks County Population</u>	<u>Percentage of Indiana Population</u>
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	533	0.3%	0.4%
Asian alone	5,330	3.1%	2.6%
Black alone	13,326	7.8%	9.9%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone	121	0.1%	0.1%
White	147,426	86.6%	84.8%
Two or more race groups	3,575	2.1%	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (can be of any race)			
Non-Hispanic	162,987	95.7%	92.7%
Hispanic	7,324	4.3%	7.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Hendricks County's population is less diverse than Indiana's population in nearly all racial groups except for the Asian population.

The Black population has increased from 1,143 people in 2000 to 6,988 people in 2010 to 13,326 people in 2019, indicating a trend toward more racial diversity within the county as time goes on. The Black population has increased by 90.1% from 2010 to 2019 and by 1,066% from 2000 to 2019.

Of the 58,078 households in Hendricks County, 27.1% are married with children while 32.3% are married without children. People living alone account for 21.9% of households, and single parents make up 8.3% of households.

Hendricks County is a well-educated county compared to Indiana as a whole, with 93.4% of adults holding a high school diploma or higher (compared to 88.6% in Indiana) and 36.3% holding a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher (compared to 25.9% statewide).

HCP&R does not have an efficient, reliable method of tracking the ages, races, or socioeconomic information of its park guests, so there is not a good way to compare the diversity of park patrons to that of the entire county. However, observations from park staff indicate that people of a variety of ages and races visit McCloud Nature Park and the Vandalia Trail.

Concerted efforts are made during the publication of *The Explorer* magazine to use photos that feature people of color and of all ages and both genders, and a quarter-page statement appears in every magazine describing the department's desire for diversity and tolerance.



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Clubs, Groups and Organizations

HCP&R welcomes groups and clubs that would like to utilize the parks. The department partners with, presents to, and cooperates with many local clubs, groups, and organizations.

The Indiana Astronomical Society holds monthly astronomy programs at McCloud Nature Park during the summer. Scout organizations often utilize McCloud Nature Park, a local bluebird society has done work at McCloud, and McCloud is often used by photographers - including the Hendricks County Photography Club - as a backdrop for family photography or the subject of nature photography. The Tri-West High School Service Club spends the day at McCloud twice a year, doing community service work there.

Field trips at McCloud Nature Park are very popular among schools, daycares, church groups, homeschoolers and other groups. HCP&R naturalists also offer monthly programs called the Homeschool Ecology Series and works with local homeschool groups to provide nature-related programming through this series that meets the educational needs of homeschool students.

The Hendricks County Disc Golf Club has been instrumental in the design of the disc golf course at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park and has discussed using the park as their headquarters. Avon High School has sent students to the park during the Avon Junior Day of Caring, and an Eagle Scout has already completed his service project at the park, building habitat for the fish that will be stocked in the pond in the future.

HCP&R regularly hosts programs in parks operated by different departments, which provides the department with a new audience and provides the park's hosting department some programming that isn't normally offered there. In turn, the park's hosting department provides yard games for guests at McCloud Nature Park during special events such as the Fall Colors Festival and the McCloud Bee Fest.

HCP&R naturalists lead a monthly program at local libraries in Hendricks, Morgan, Boone, and Putnam Counties that combine reading a book about native animals or plants to preschoolers, and then leading them in a craft. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the naturalists also went to Hendricks County schools during the fall and winter months to present programs to the students there.



Members of the Tri-West High School Service Club have raised funds for park benches at McCloud Nature Park and provide a free day of volunteer labor at the park twice a year.



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The B&O Trail Association uses McCloud Nature Park as a Support and Gear (SAG) Station during their annual B&O Bicycle Tour. The HCP&R maintenance crew has also assisted with construction and maintenance of the B&O Trail on a few occasions.

HCP&R maintains a close working relationship with the Friends of the Vandalia Trail after taking over operations of the trail in 2016, and that group frequently completes volunteer work clearing leaves from the trail, removing invasive species, picking up trash, and other valuable beautification assistance.

Additionally, HCP&R staff routinely attend local Chamber of Commerce meetings, service club (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.) meetings, Boy Scout and Girl Scout council meetings, the Hendricks County 4-H Fair, Fair on the Square, Old Fashion Days, and other group meetings and community events to discuss the parks, programs, and other topics relating to parks and recreation.

Some members of the HCP&R staff have volunteered their time to work at the Winterland Holiday Light Show at Ellis Park, an annual event hosted by Danville Parks & Recreation.



Avon Junior Day of Caring at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.



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Economy

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

According to STATS Indiana, the leading employment sectors in Hendricks County in 2019 were:

- Transportation and Warehousing - 13,582 jobs
- Retail Trade - 12,345 jobs
- Accommodation and Food Service - 7,618 jobs
- Admin. and Waste Services - 6,979 jobs
- Healthcare and Social Assistance - 5,187 jobs

Major employers in Hendricks County include:

- Mr. Electric, Plainfield
- Ferrell Gas, Coatesville
- Duke Energy, Plainfield
- Hendricks Regional Health, Danville
- Q-edge Corporation, Plainfield
- Home Goods, Brownsburg
- Guitar Center, Brownsburg
- Walmart Distribution Center, Plainfield
- IU Health West, Avon
- Geodis, Plainfield

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that approximately 67.4% of residents aged 16 years and older were employed in 2018. Of the 90,412 residents in the labor force, approximately 2,446 were unemployed (2.7%). During the same period of time, the unemployment rate in Indiana was 3.3%.

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected employment numbers in Hendricks County and across the state of Indiana. The Indiana Department of Workforce Development reports a 5.9% unemployment rate in Hendricks County during July of 2020, while Indiana's unemployment rate jumped to 7.9%.

STATS Indiana reports that the median household income in Hendricks County was \$80,834 in 2018, which ranked third in the state, well above the Indiana median household income of \$55,725. Just under 6% of the Hendricks County population lives in poverty.

With Hendricks County unemployment at a lower rate than that of Indiana, and median household incomes exceeding the state average, Hendricks County is fortunate to enjoy strong collection of property and income taxes for the County General Fund. Additionally, residents (and visitors) are financially able and willing to eat and drink in Hendricks County establishments and stay in Hendricks County hotels, thus providing a steady stream of supplemental income for HCP&R through Food & Beverage and Innkeepers taxes.



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Roadways

Hendricks County's transportation network includes several significant road corridors.

Three interstates run through Hendricks County:

- **I-70** runs across the southern and southeastern portion of the county, past Plainfield on its way to Indianapolis.
- **I-74** runs across the northern and northeastern portion of the county, past Brownsburg on its way to Indianapolis.
- A very short portion of **I-65** clips the far northeastern corner of Hendricks County.



Three U.S. highways come through Hendricks County:

- **U.S. Highway 40** (also known as the Historic National Road) runs parallel to I-70 across the southern portion of the county in a northeast-southwest direction. It connects Stilesville, the unincorporated town of Belleville, and Plainfield on its way to Indianapolis.
- **U.S. Highway 36** travels east-west through the center of the county, bisecting it into its northern and southern halves. U.S. 36 connects Danville to Avon on its way to Indianapolis.
- **U.S. Highway 136** runs northwest-southeast through the northern portion of Hendricks County, parallel to I-74. It connects the towns of Lizton, Pittsboro, and Brownsburg on its way to Indianapolis.

Four state highways traverse the county:

- **State Road 39** runs north-south and bisects the county into its western and eastern halves. This road connects the unincorporated town of Belleville, Clayton, Danville, and Lizton.
- **State Road 267** runs north-south in the eastern portion of the county, connecting Plainfield, Avon, and Brownsburg.
- **State Road 75** runs north-south in the western portion of the county, connecting Coatesville and North Salem. The Vandalia Trail crosses SR 75 in Coatesville, and McCloud Nature Park is near SR 75, to the southwest of North Salem.
- **State Road 236** travels northwest-southeast and connects Danville to North Salem.

Additionally, the Hendricks County Highway Department maintains 772 miles of county roads, and each town maintains the streets within its borders.

Much of the county's growth has occurred along these transportation corridors, particularly in the eastern portion of the county.

HCP&R is currently working with the Indiana Department of Transportation to add wayfinding signs for McCloud Nature Park and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park along major roadways throughout Hendricks County.



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An updated interchange at I-70 and SR 39 brought some recent economic development to that area of the county in the form of a business park along SR 39, just north of I-70.

In 2019, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) awarded a \$16.2 million contract to Milestone Contractors LP to redesign the I-70/SR 39 interchange into a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI). A DDI is a type of interchange in which the two directions of traffic on a non-highway road cross to the opposite side on both sides of a bridge. It is unusual in that it requires traffic on the highway overpass to briefly drive on the opposite side of the road from what is customary. Construction of the DDI began in October of 2019, and its anticipated completion date is the fall of 2021. This new interchange is expected to bring significant economic development to the area.

It was noted by community stakeholders that amenities, including recreation amenities, would help attract development once the DDI is complete.



Conceptual drawing of DDI at I-70 and SR 39. Source: Indiana Dept. of Transportation.

Hendricks 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 is frequently mentioned as a recreation destination by county residents.



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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.

Railways

Three railroads run through Hendricks County, all of which are owned and operated by **CSX**.

One railroad enters Hendricks County just west of Clermont, Indiana, in Marion County and travels through the northeast corner of the county on its way to Lebanon, Indiana, in Boone County.

A second line enters Hendricks County just west of Clermont and passes through Brownsburg, Pittsboro, and Lizton before entering Boone County in Jamestown.

The third line enters Hendricks County in Avon, runs parallel to U.S. Highway 36 into Danville, and then veers southwest, running north of Coatesville before entering Putnam County and traveling to Greencastle, Indiana.

Additionally, the CSX Avon Railyard, the CSX Avon Service Center, and the CSX Intermodal Indianapolis are all located in Avon.

These three railways are all solely used for transporting freight.

Airways

The **Indianapolis International Airport (IND)** is located just across the Hendricks-Marion County Line to the east of Plainfield. A portion of the Indianapolis Airport Authority's property extends into Hendricks County. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) classifies the airport as a medium hub, and it is home to the second-largest FedEx Express hub in the world.

In 2019, a total of 9,537,377 passengers traveled through Indianapolis International Airport, including 176,470 international travelers, according to the Indianapolis Airport Authority. A total of 1,010,825 tons of freight made its way through the airport in 2019.

Hendricks County capitalizes on this air traffic by positioning a number of hotels and restaurants directly to the west of the airport in Plainfield. These hotels and restaurants play an important role in the collection of Food & Beverage and Innkeepers taxes, which are a vital component of funding for HCP&R.

The Indianapolis Airport Authority also owns and operates the **Hendricks County Airport - Gordon Graham Field (2R2)** in Danville. It is a small airport with two runways that are primarily used by single-engine planes.

In 2019, Gordon Graham Field averaged about 37 aircraft operations per day, the vast majority of which were for local or transient general aviation.



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Trails

A number of municipalities and townships in Hendricks County maintain trails, including Plainfield, Avon, Brownsburg, Danville, Washington Township and Guilford Township. In addition, Hendricks County is home to two rail-trails.

The paved **B&O Trail** in Hendricks County runs along the former route of the B&O Railroad from the Hendricks-Marion County line just south of Clermont 6.1 miles generally west traversing the south side of Brownsburg and currently ending at County Road 500 East. Most of the B&O Trail is owned and maintained by the B&O Trail Association Inc. (BOTA), an Indiana not-for-profit company, but the Town of Brownsburg owns and maintains a 2.8-mile segment from Ronald Reagan Parkway west to Green Street. BOTA owns most of the railway corridor in Hendricks County west of County Road 500 East and is actively continuing to develop and extend this popular recreational resource.

The Speedway Trail Association (STA) along with the Town of Speedway have completed another 1.6 miles of the B&O Trail in Speedway and STA has received a Next Level Trails grant that will enable it to complete the paving and trail amenities from Michigan Street in the near west side of Indianapolis to Girl School Road west of Speedway. The mutual goal of BOTA and STA is to connect the Hendricks County and Marion County segments of the B&O Trail as soon as available funding makes this possible.

Eventually, the goal is to extend the B&O Trail all the way from Indianapolis through North Salem, out to the Putnam County/Hendricks County line and beyond, perhaps as far as Montezuma, Ind.

The paved **Vandalia Trail** runs along the former route of the Vandalia Railroad in the southern portion of Hendricks County. The section of the trail that is operated by HCP&R is 4.1 miles long and spans from the Hendricks-Putnam County line through Coatesville to Amo.

The paved portion of the Vandalia Trail within Plainfield town limits is operated by Plainfield Parks & Recreation and is about 4 miles in length. The two sections do not currently connect, and Plainfield's portion of the Vandalia Trail does not currently connect to Marion County.

The overarching goal is to have the Vandalia Trail span the entire width of Hendricks County. It would serve as part of the National Road Heritage Trail that is envisioned to cross the entire state from Terre Haute to Richmond. The National Road Heritage Trail and the B&O Trail have both been identified by the State of Indiana as Visionary Trails.



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Education System

Hendricks County is served by six public school corporations, plus some private schools.

Avon Community School Corporation

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



Brownsburg Community School Corporation

- Brownsburg High School
- Harris Academy
- Brownsburg East Middle School
- Brownsburg West Middle School
- Brown Elementary School
- Cardinal Elementary School
- Delaware Trail Elementary School
- Eagle Elementary School
- Lincoln Elementary School
- Reagan Elementary School
- White Lick Elementary School
- Brownsburg Early Childhood Center



Danville Community School Corporation

- Danville Community High School
- Central Normal Campus
- Danville Community Middle School
- Danville North Elementary School
- Danville South Elementary School





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Mill Creek Community School Corporation

- Cascade High School
- Cascade Middle School
- Mill Creek East Elementary School
- Mill Creek West Elementary School
- Little Cadet Preschool



North West Hendricks School Corporation

- Tri-West High School
- Tri-West Middle School
- North Salem Elementary School
- Pittsboro Elementary School
- Pittsboro Primary School
- 1883 One Room Schoolhouse



Plainfield Community School Corporation

- Plainfield High School
- Pride Academy
- Plainfield Community Middle School
- Brentwood Elementary School
- Central Elementary School
- Clarks Creek Elementary School
- Van Buren Elementary School
- Little Quakers Academy



Private Schools

- Kingsway Christian School (Avon)
- Our Shepherd Lutheran School (Avon)
- Bethesda Christian Schools (Brownsburg)
- St. Malachy Catholic School (Brownsburg)
- St. Susanna Catholic School (Plainfield)

Each school has a comprehensive list of enrichment and extracurricular 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 with the Plainfield Community School Corporation for swim education and team practices.



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Public Libraries

Hendricks County is home to six public libraries:

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

Historic and Cultural Features

There are several historical places of interest within Hendricks County, including 19 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places and an additional seven sites recognized by the Indiana Historical Bureau.

National Register of Historic Places

- Ora Adams House (Danville)
- Amo THI&E Interurban Depot (Amo)
- Leander Campbell House (Danville)
- Danville Courthouse Square Historic District
- Danville Main Street Historic District
- Dr. Jeremiah & Anne Jane DePew House (Danville)
- Hendricks County Bridge Number 316, AKA Friendship Gardens Bridge (Plainfield)
- Hendricks County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, AKA Hendricks County Museum (Danville)
- Joel Jessup Farm (Friendswood)
- Noah Kellum & Hannah Hadley House (Camby)
- Kellum-Jessup-Chandler Farm (Plainfield)
- John W. McClain House (Avon)
- McCormack-Bowman House (Clayton)
- Plainfield Historic District
- Smith Farm (Plainfield)
- Sugar Grove Meetinghouse and Cemetery (Plainfield)
- THI&E Interurban Depot Substation (Plainfield)
- Twin Bridges (Danville)
- Wilson-Courtney House (Danville)



Danville-Center Township Public Library



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Indiana Historical Bureau Markers

- Western Yearly Meeting House (Plainfield)
- Danville Main Street Historic District
- Danville Carnegie Library
- Central Normal College (Danville)
- Samuel Luther Thompson (Danville)
- Arthur L. Trester (Amo, at the Amo trailhead of the Vandalia Trail)
- Adrian A. Parsons (Avon)

Other Historical Sites and Points of Interest

- 1883 One Room Schoolhouse (Pittsboro)
- Historic National Road - U.S. Highway 40 (Plainfield, Stilesville)
- Site of the Van Buren Elm (Plainfield)



1883 One Room Schoolhouse. Source: Visit Hendricks County.

Arts & Entertainment

The **Hendricks County Historical Museum** is located in Danville, and it collects, preserves, and interprets items relating to the people, places, and events of Hendricks County. The building, which once served as the residence of the Hendricks County Sheriff and as the Hendricks County Jail, is located one block south of the Hendricks County Courthouse Square.

The **Royal Theater**, located on the east side of the Hendricks County Courthouse Square in Danville, has provided Hendricks County residents and visitors with first-run movies, classic movies, live music, and other entertainment since 1927.

The **Gallery on the Square** is also located on the east side of the Courthouse Square, and it displays local artwork and offers pieces of art for purchase. It is home to the **Hendricks County Arts Council**.

Hendricks Civic Theatre provides community theater performances primarily at the **Longstreet Playhouse** in the unincorporated community of Maplewood, north of Danville.

Avon is home to the **Hendricks Symphony Orchestra and Chorus**, which performs at a variety of locations and events in and around Hendricks County throughout the year.



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Sporting Events

Lucas Oil Raceway is located in Brownsburg, and it contains a 0.686-mile paved oval track and a 4,400-foot-long drag strip. Many motorsports events are held at the raceway, highlighted by NHRA U.S. Nationals every year. ARCA stock car racing, USAC sprint car racing, the U.S. F2000 National Championship, motorcycle racing, and many other events also take place at Lucas Oil Raceway. Additionally, the facility opens on a regular basis for racing among members of the public.

The **Indiana Lyons**, a team with the American Basketball Association (ABA), play their home games at Bosstick Gym in Danville. Founded in 2018, this semi-pro basketball team qualified for the ABA playoffs in each of its first three seasons of existence. The 2020-21 team finished the regular season ranked #12 in the league, out of about 75 ABA teams, won the North Central Region Championship, and competed in the ABA's Final Eight.



The Indiana Lyons provide high-octane semi-pro basketball action in Hendricks County.
Source: Antonio Toppin.

Community Events

Hendricks County is home to a wide variety of community events of various sizes and areas of focus throughout the year. Visit Hendricks County keeps an online calendar of events up-to-date on their website.

Some of the most popular community events within the county are:

- Amo Fish Fry
- Christmas Under the Stars Parade (Brownsburg)
- Fair on the Square (Danville)
- Fall Colors Festival (North Salem; an HCP&R event)
- Heartland Apple Festival (Danville)
- Hendricks County 4-H Fair (Danville)
- Hendricks County Rib-Fest and Balloon Glow (Danville)
- Mayberry in the Midwest (Danville)
- North Salem Old Fashion Days
- Quaker Days (Plainfield)
- Winterland Holiday Light Show (Danville)

There are also several Independence Day and Christmas celebrations throughout the county every year, which are heavily attended.



Natural Features of Hendricks County

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 about 15,000 years ago.

There are no bodies of water in Hendricks County of appreciable size. The largest is approximately 24 acres. There are several 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 and running through Brownsburg, Avon, and Plainfield. 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 Hendricks County as valuable to preserve to maintain habitat for sensitive wildlife. These include the riparian corridors of White Lick Creek and 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.”

Soils

The soils in Hendricks 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 create some limitations for construction due to their wetness and potential for erosion.

The poorly drained soils also create moderate to significant limitations for recreational uses, including campgrounds, picnic areas, play areas, paths, and trails. These limitations are based on the soils’ restrictive qualities such as flooding, wetness, and slope. Appropriate site design, intensive maintenance, limited use of the site, or a combination of these measures can overcome the soils’ limitations.

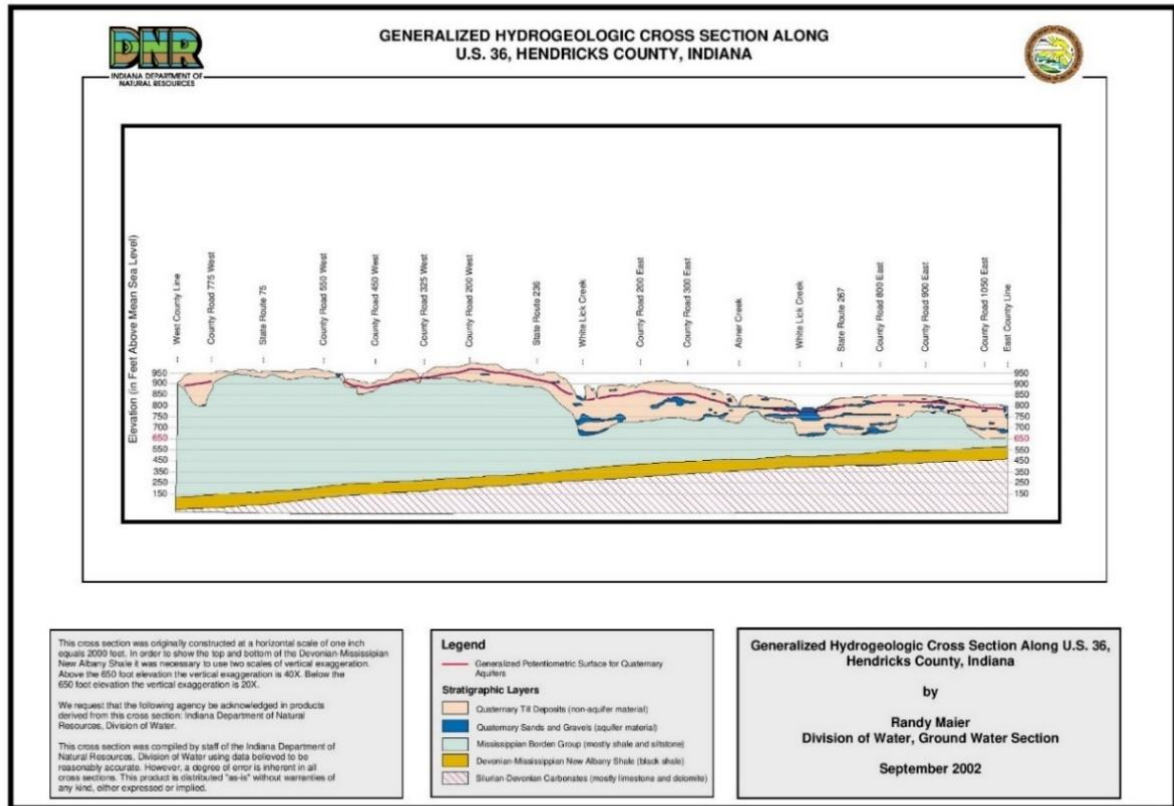
Climate

Hendricks County has a continental climate characterized by winter temperatures cold enough to support snow cover and warm temperatures typical of tropical climates in the summer. The county is subject to the various conditions of all four seasons – spring, summer, autumn, and 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.

Overall, the climatic patterns support a wide range of recreation activities, although winter snowfalls 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 only on a limited basis.



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Hendricks County Climate at a Glance

Month	Average High Temperatures (°F)	Average Low Temperatures (°F)	Average Precipitation (inches)	Average Snowfall (inches)
January	35.6	20.5	2.66	8.6
February	40.2	23.9	2.32	6.5
March	51.7	32.8	3.56	2.6
April	63.4	42.7	3.81	0.2
May	72.8	52.6	5.05	Trace
June	81.9	62.1	4.25	0.0
July	85.0	65.8	4.55	0.0
August	84.0	64.4	3.13	0.0
September	77.6	56.2	3.12	0.0
October	65.3	44.7	3.12	0.4
November	52.2	35.1	3.70	0.7
December	38.9	24.4	3.17	6.9
Annual	62.5	43.9	42.44	25.9

Source: <https://www.weather.gov/ind/localcli#norm>



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Watersheds

Most of Indiana is located within the **Ohio Region**, identified by the two-digit Hydrological Unit Code (HUC) of 05.

Throughout the United States, each region is divided into subregions and assigned a four-digit HUC. The majority of Indiana, including Hendricks County, is within the **Wabash Subregion** (0512).

The Wabash Subregion is divided into two accounting units, or basins, each of which is designated by a six-digit HUC: **Wabash** (051201) and **Patoka-White** (051202). Almost all of Hendricks County lies within the Patoka-White Basin.

Patoka-White Basin, which covers the Patoka and White River basins, is broken down into nine cataloging units, or subbasins that are each given an eight-digit HUC.

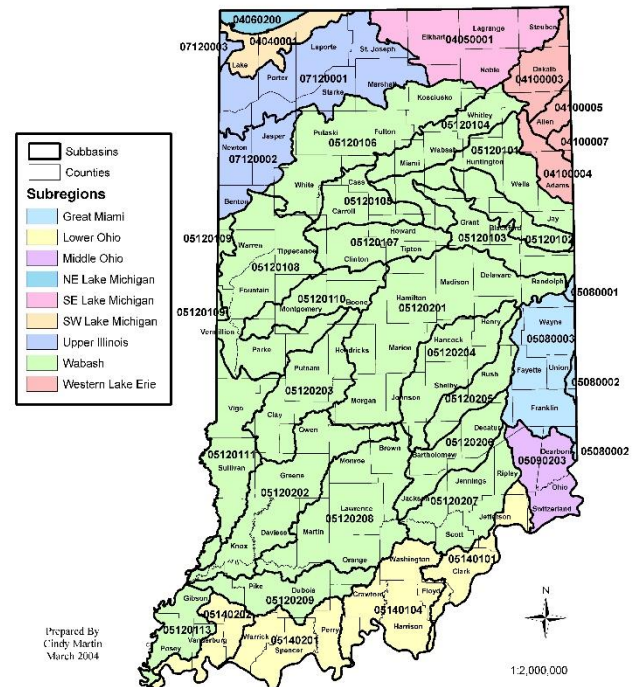
Wabash Basin, which covers the Wabash River basin excluding the Patoka and White River basins, is broken down into 15 cataloging units.

Hendricks County is primarily covered by the **Upper White River** (05120201) and the **Eel-West Fork White River (WFWR)** (05120203) Subbasins of the Patoka-White Basin. A small finger of the **Middle Wabash-Little Vermillion** (05120108) Subbasin of the Wabash Basin covers the northwesternmost corner of the county.

Subbasins are then divided into watersheds, each of which receive a 10-digit HUC. A total of seven watersheds exist in Hendricks County.

Watersheds are subsequently divided into subwatersheds, each receiving a 12-digit HUC. There are 15 subwatersheds within Hendricks County.

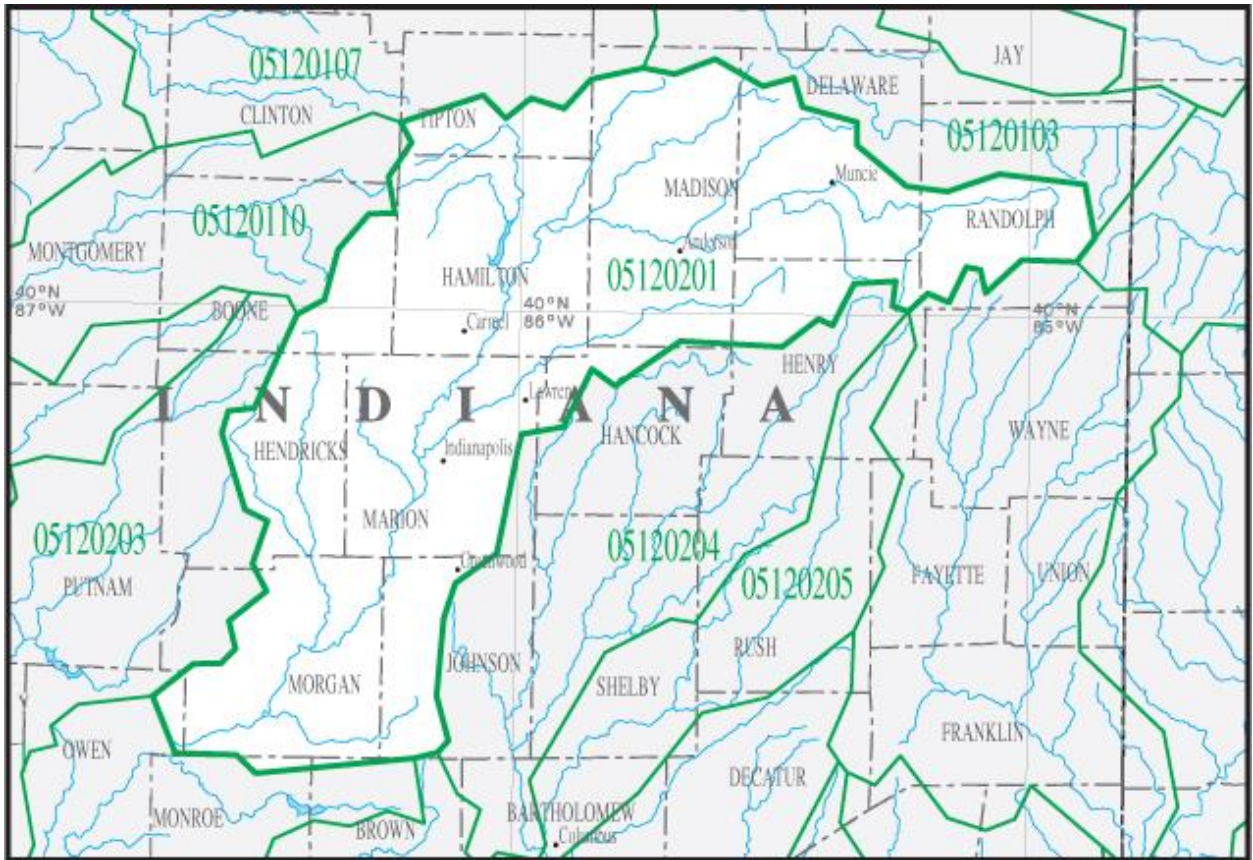
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code Areas within the Subregions





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Upper White River Subbasin



Upper White River Subbasin (HUC 05120201). Source: USGS

The northeast corner of Hendricks County is within the **Eagle Creek** (0512020112) Watershed. None of HCP&R's properties are within this watershed.

Most of the eastern portion of Hendricks County, which includes W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, is part of the **White Lick Creek** Watershed (0512020113).

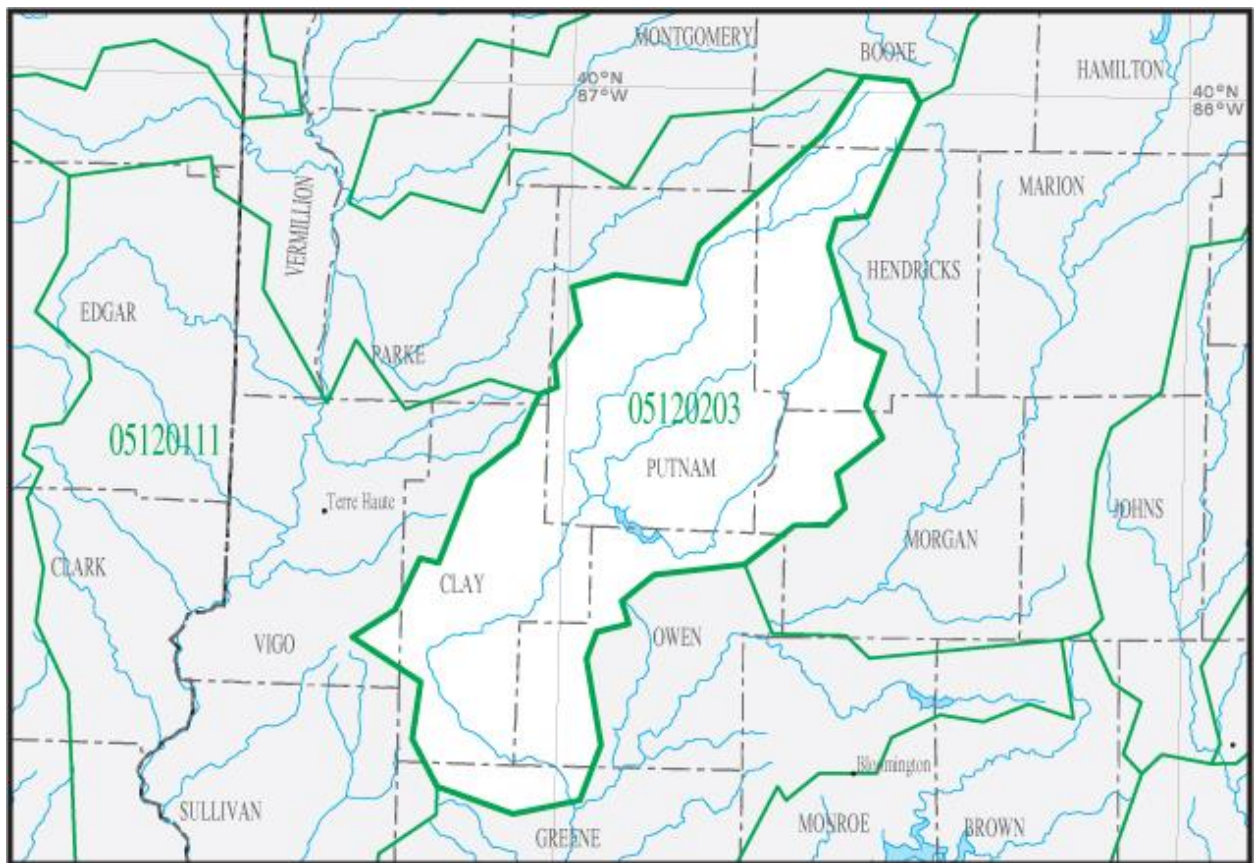
A total of nine subwatersheds within the Eagle Creek and White Lick Creek Watersheds of the Upper White River Subbasin are located in part or entirely within Hendricks County.

The eastern portion of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park lies within the **Clarks Creek-White Lick Creek** (HUC 051202011306) Subwatershed while the western portion of the property is part of the **West Fork White Lick Creek** (051202011305) Subwatershed.



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Eel - West Fork White River (WFWR) Subbasin



Eel - West Fork White River (WFWR) Subbasin (HUC 05120203). Source: USGS

Most of the southwestern portion of the county is in the **Mill Creek** (0512020305) Watershed. The majority of HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail, including both trailheads, lies within this watershed.

A total of four subwatersheds within the Eel WFWR Subbasin are located in part or entirely within Hendricks County.

The Coatesville trailhead of the Vandalia Trail is located within the **Sallust Branch-Mill Creek** (051202030503) Subwatershed of the Mill Creek Watershed, while the Amo trailhead is located within the **Headwaters Mill Creek** (0512030502) Subwatershed of the Mill Creek Watershed.

A small portion of the **Deer Creek** (0512020303) Watershed juts into Hendricks County just west of Coatesville. A short section of the Vandalia Trail between Coatesville and the Hendricks-Putnam County Line runs through this watershed.

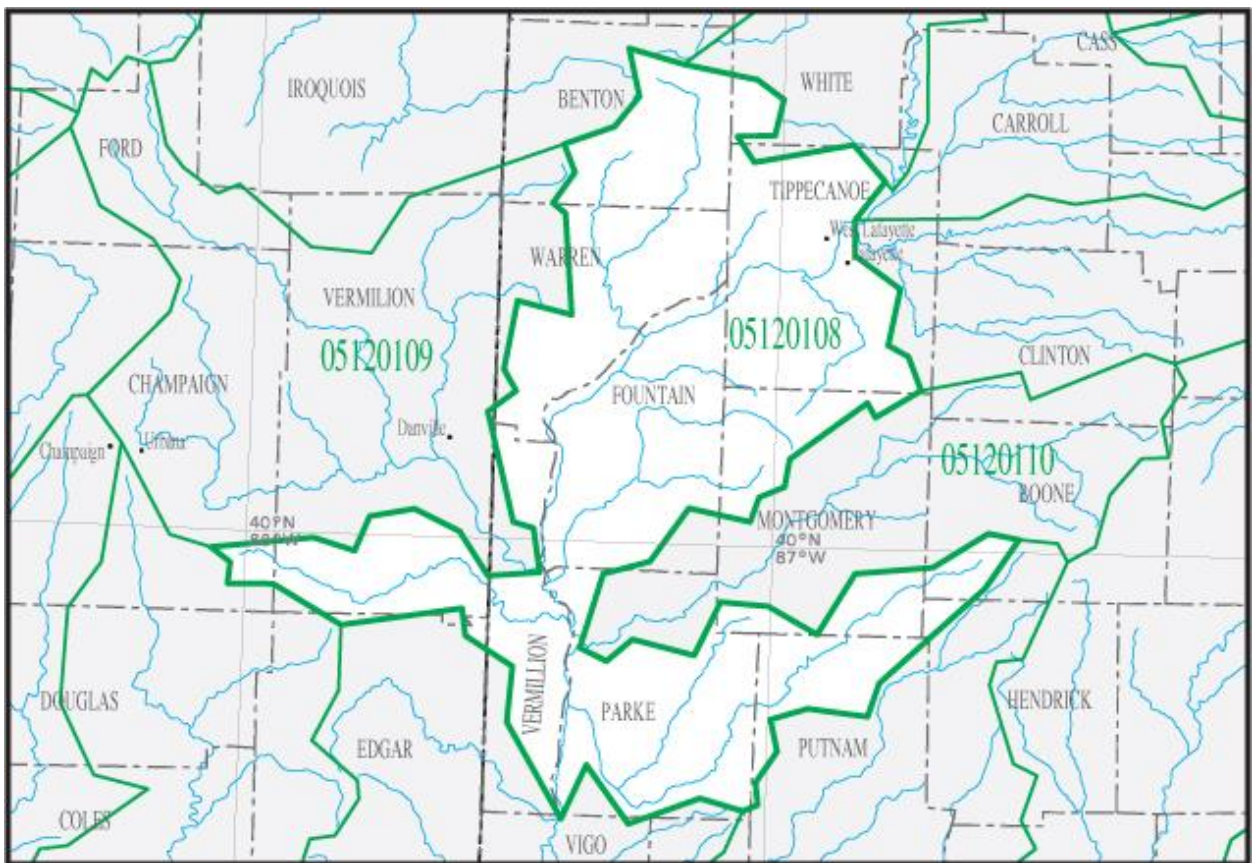
Much of the northwestern portion of Hendricks County is within the **East Fork Big Walnut Creek** (0512020301) Watershed. HCP&R does not operate any properties within this watershed.



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The **Big Walnut Creek** (0512020304) Watershed runs along the western edge of Hendricks County and encompasses McCloud Nature Park. McCloud Nature Park lies within the **Town of Banard-Big Walnut Creek** (051202030401) Subwatershed of the Big Walnut Creek Watershed.

Middle Wabash-Little Vermillion Subbasin



Middle Wabash-Little Vermillion Subbasin (HUC 05120108). Source: USGS

A small section of the **Cecil M. Hardin Lake-Raccoon Creek** (0512010804) Watershed runs through the northwesternmost corner of Hendricks County. None of HCP&R's properties are located within this watershed.

Two subwatersheds - **Little Raccoon Creek-Big Raccoon Creek** (051201081207) and **Haw Creek** (051201081206) - of the Middle Wabash-Little Vermillion Subbasin reach into a very small portion of northwest Hendricks County.



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Impact of Natural Features on HCP&R

Terrain

There is not a lot of diversity in the terrain of Hendricks County, with most of the landscape being flat. HCP&R is fortunate to operate McCloud Nature Park in a rare area of the county that features some varying terrain, glacial ravines, woods, prairie, and a creek. This makes for a unique attraction for nature enthusiasts to visit.

On the flip side of that coin, the flat terrain that used to be farmland made for a challenge in the construction of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – that is, giving the park some personality and something unique for park guests to enjoy. Ultimately, HCP&R decided to construct two ponds totaling 5½ acres in size to give the park a water feature. The soil that was excavated from the pond was then used to build a hill that will serve as an outlook during the warmer months and as a sledding hill after snowfalls.

Invasive Plants

Invasive plant species create a continual issue in all three of HCP&R's properties. Invasives such as garlic mustard, autumn olive, multiflora rose, and honeysuckle require a great deal of manpower, equipment, and chemicals to remove.

HCP&R naturalists have held Garlic Mustard Pulls as programs for the public at McCloud Nature Park, scout groups have come out to McCloud to remove invasive plants, and students from the Tri-West High School Service Club and Avon High School have been out to McCloud to remove invasives.

HCP&R has partnered with Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM) to host Weed Wrangle® programs at McCloud Nature Park and along the Vandalia Trail, and this program will be held at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park after it opens to the public.



Members of the HCP&R maintenance crew prepare to use a FECON forestry mulcher to clear invasive plants and trees at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

The HCP&R maintenance crew has spent months clearing out invasive plants and trees from the W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park before, during, and after construction. Some areas of the land had not been managed for about 60 years, so HCP&R has had to use a rented forestry mulcher to clear out invasives in large sections of the property.

The 52-acre prairie at McCloud Nature Park is managed using prescribed prairie burns on a regular basis. Normally, the prairie is burned every 2 to 3 years to increase biodiversity and to help control invasive plant species. Once the prairie burn is completed, the invasive woody plants remain, allowing for easy identification and removal by the HCP&R maintenance crew.



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The most recent prescribed prairie burn at McCloud Nature Park was conducted by Turner Forestry on March 29, 2021. A prescribed burn scheduled for 2019 never took place because of an especially wet spring, so the prairie hadn't been burned between 2016 and 2020. As a result, prescribed prairie burns were conducted in 2020 and 2021 to help promote biodiversity of native plants and grasses in the prairie while also providing another opportunity to remove invasive species. A third burn is planned for 2022, after which time the prairie will go back to the three-year rotation burn plan.



Prescribed prairie burn at McCloud Nature Park on April 8, 2020. *Source: Deb Stukenborg*

Invasive Insects

Without question, the most destructive invasive insect that HCP&R has had to deal with is the Emerald Ash Borer. The infestation throughout the Midwest of the beetle that is native to northeast Asia has had catastrophic effects on ash trees, including those at all three of HCP&R's properties.

Thousands of ash trees have been killed by the Emerald Ash Borer at McCloud Nature Park, W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, and along the Vandalia Trail, resulting in HCP&R spending thousands of dollars on having dead ash trees removed as well as the HCP&R maintenance crew spending an untold amount of manpower removing the dead



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trees themselves. Dead ash trees remain standing in very large numbers at all three properties, so the removal process will continue to cost the department money and manpower. HCP&R is partnering with the Town of Coatesville to cut down the dead trees along the Vandalia Trail.

Once the dead trees are removed, HCP&R will consult with the Indiana DNR Division of Forestry for expert guidance and possible financial assistance through grants to reforest the areas that were devastated by the borers.

Water

Since the soil across Hendricks County does not drain well, HCP&R constantly deals with standing water, flooding, and erosion issues.

Big Walnut Creek frequently floods during and after heavy sustained rainfall, which caused significant erosion of the creek bank and often flooded a lower portion of McCloud Nature Park. To combat these issues, jetties were installed along the creek bank in 2016 by Environmental Remediation Contractor out of Columbus, Ohio, to protect from erosion.

Additionally, a wetland habitat was constructed in the area of the park that frequently floods, and a large boardwalk and observation deck was constructed by the HCP&R maintenance crew to allow park guests, school children, and other groups of people to observe the habitat, even when it's flooded.



Aerial view of wetland habitat, boardwalk, and observation deck at McCloud Nature Park. *Source: Dave Novak.*



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Drainage became an issue in 2018 along the Vandalia Trail after it was paved. A contracted engineering firm miscalculated the size of the watershed that feeds into Crittenden Creek, so improper drainage was designed and installed during the paving project. That error, combined with several historical rain events in 2018, resulted in frequent heavy flooding along the trail and surrounding area.

A new drainage system was designed to handle 100-year floods and was installed in 2019, which ended the heavy flooding problems. The system was specifically designed to slow down the water flow before it reached Crittenden Creek in an effort to minimize erosion of the creek bank.

Drainage is a constant challenge at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. The land was poorly drained to begin with and was farmland with no vegetation. Since construction began, roads and parking lots were paved, and ponds and a hill were created, attention has perpetually been focused on drainage and erosion.

An ephemeral creek bed on the property was cleared out by the HCP&R maintenance crew, which improved drainage after rainfall, and a system of culverts and erosion control were designed and constructed throughout the park, especially around the forebay and ponds.

Several boardwalks throughout the park allow guests to continue hiking trails, even through some low spots on the property that still collect standing water from time to time. Plans are in the works to plant a rain garden at the front of the property next to the entrance to deal with an area that continues to collect standing water, even after multiple attempts at a drainage system in that area.



Forebay weir and erosion control / natural water filtration system at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Turf grass blankets can be seen on the hill in the background. Prairie grass blankets were added on the ends of the hill after this photo was taken.

Grass blankets have been staked to the hill at the park to combat erosion. Native prairie grass seed is on the two steep end slopes, while turf grass seed is on the top of the hill and down its wider sides with gentler slopes. HCP&R will need to carefully monitor the growth of that grass - especially on the slopes - as well as erosion and the wear-and-tear that the grass receives from the public after the park opens. Some sort of alternate system of erosion control may need to be devised and implemented in the future.



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Hendricks County Parks and Trails

HCP&R operates McCloud Nature Park and a section of the Vandalia Trail that runs from Amo through Coatesville to the Hendricks-Putnam County line.

Additionally, the Park Board owns a section of land along County Road 500 S. adjoining the western border of the Town of Clayton and has purchased right-of-way access to another piece of property along CR 500 S. with the intention of expanding the Vandalia Trail eastward from Amo to Clayton.

Another park - W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park in Avon - is currently under construction and scheduled to open to the public in the summer of 2021.

McCloud Nature Park

**8518 Hughes Road
North Salem, IN 46165**

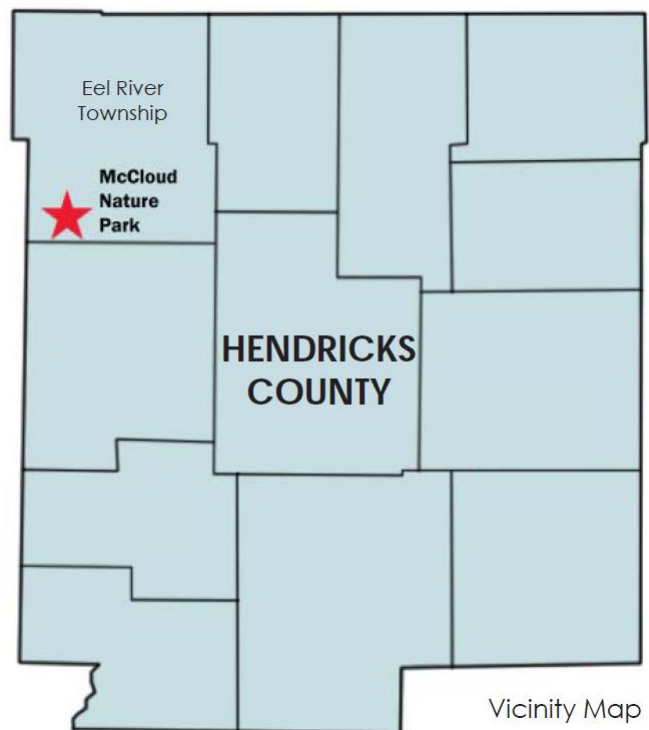
Located in Eel River Township in the northwest corner of Hendricks County, McCloud Nature Park is HCP&R's first park, opened in 2003. At 232 acres, it is also the department's largest park.

McCloud's varied terrain includes wetlands, open grassland, the Big Walnut Creek, seeps, and forested hills. A master plan completed in 2008 proposed expanding and protecting the natural qualities of the park for education and passive recreation purposes, a goal that was supported by public and stakeholder comments at the time. The variety of natural communities present in the park offer opportunities to explore and compare different ecosystems.

Amenities

Amenities at McCloud Nature Park include:

- Big Walnut Creek access
- Restored 100+ year-old truss bridge
- 6.5 miles of well-marked trails in varying levels of difficulty and terrain
- 15' x 30' pavilion with grills and picnic tables
- Nature Center
 - Interactive exhibits
 - Bird-viewing room
 - Resource library
 - Modern restrooms



Vicinity Map



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- Family programming, summer day camps, and festivals
- 800-square-foot wetland habitat boardwalk and observation deck
- 3-acre arboretum with interpretive signage
- Live observable honeybee habitat with interpretive signage
- Astronomy pads and viewing programs
- 52-acre prairie
- Woodland communities
- Nature play area

Visitation

McCloud Nature Park sees between 50,000 and 60,000 visitors per year – a total that rises annually. April and May of 2020 brought record one-month visitation totals each month as people emerged from sheltering in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each one of those months saw close to 10,000 visitors, and 2020 resulted in a single-year attendance record of close to 90,000 park guests.

The park is also home to some popular annual festivals. **Maple Syrup Days** are held during the first two Saturdays in March, the **McCloud Bee Fest** is held in late August, and the **Fall Colors Festival** is held in late October. With a typical annual attendance of about 2,500 people, the Fall Colors Festival is most often HCP&R's largest one-day festival, although the 2018 McCloud Bee Fest gave the Fall Colors Festival a run for its money with an estimated 2,000 park guests that day.



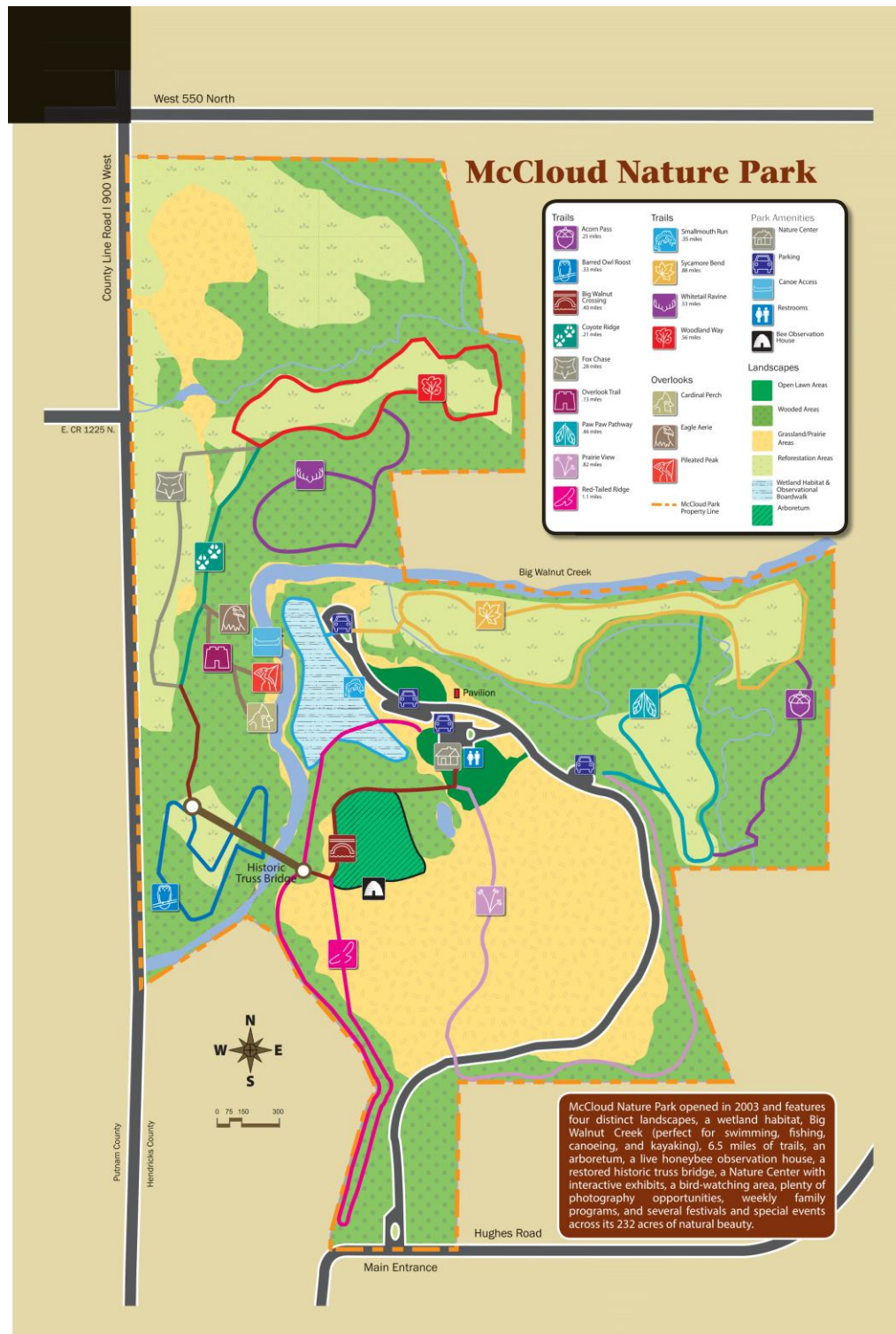
McCloud Bee Fest



Fall Colors Festival at McCloud Nature Park



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Vandalia Trail

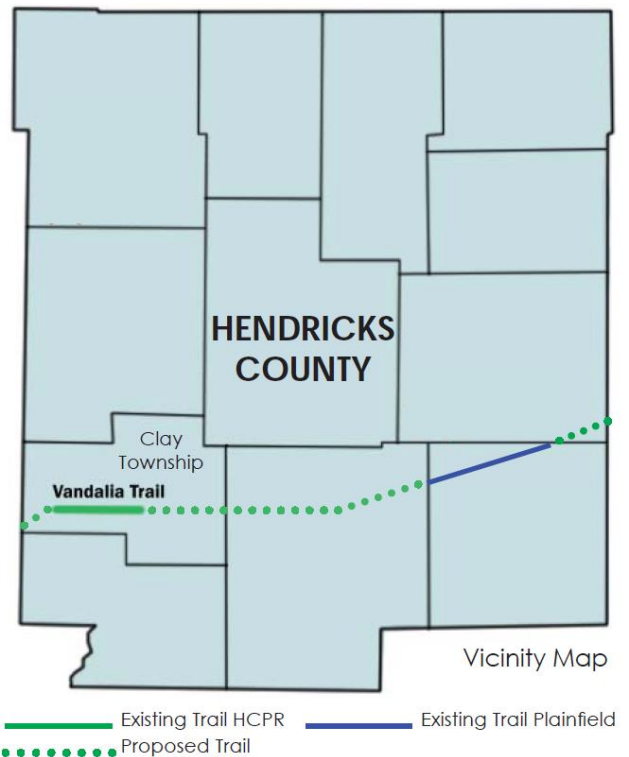
Amo Trailhead
5042 South Street
Amo, IN 46103

Coatesville Trailhead
7963 Main Street
Coatesville, IN 46121

The Vandalia Trail is a paved 4.1-mile trail for hiking, jogging, and bicycling that runs on or near the former Vandalia rail corridor. An equestrian trail runs parallel to the pedestrian trail. The trail connects the towns of Amo and Coatesville in southwest Hendricks County and connects with the People Pathways at the Hendricks-Putnam County line. People Pathways continues west to Greencastle, Ind.

In addition to the Coatesville-Amo segment of the trail, a 5-mile segment of the Vandalia Trail is located in Plainfield as part of the town's trail network. That section of the trail is operated by Plainfield Parks & Recreation.

The Vandalia Trail, which is part of the National Road Heritage Trail, is planned to extend across the state of Indiana from Terre Haute to Richmond. The National Road Heritage Trail has been designated by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources as a Visionary Trail.



Installation of the restrooms at the Coatesville trailhead, 2018

The trail opened in 2005 through the efforts of volunteers, the Indiana Trails Fund, and private donations. Although HCP&R didn't initially own the trail, the department established a partnership with the Indiana Trails Fund in 2007 and maintained the natural-surface portion of the trail connecting Amo and Coatesville.

HCP&R took possession of the Vandalia Trail in March of 2016 and, utilizing a \$1,928,000 award from the Indiana Department of Transportation, paved the entire 4.1-mile section of the trail and installed 1-acre trailheads in both Amo and Coatesville. The bridge over Crittenden Creek was also replaced. Construction was completed in 2019 and rendered the entire HCP&R-owned section of the Vandalia Trail ADA-accessible.



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The Vandalia Trail in Coatesville

In 2019, the Park Board purchased a 67-acre piece of land from Glen “Buck” Arnold that adjoins the western border of the Town of Clayton and stretches two (2) linear miles west from the town limit toward Amo along the north side of County Road 500 S. This land was purchased with the intention of extending the Vandalia Trail from Amo to Clayton, which are located five (5) miles apart from each other.

These efforts continue the long-range goal of eventually connecting HCP&R’s portion of the trail with the Town of Plainfield’s section. This HCP&R land is currently leased to a local farmer for corn and soybean crops, providing some annual income to HCP&R until the trail is developed there.

In 2020, the Park Board purchased right-of-way access to a piece of land at the front of the property of Edward and Janet Moore on the north side of CR 500 S. between Amo and Clayton. The right-of-way access area is 257 feet long and 60 feet wide, and it can be developed into an extension of the Vandalia Trail between the two towns.

HCP&R continues, through the efforts of a contracted engineering firm, to work with landowners along the north side of CR 500 S. to purchase property or right-of-way access for the entire five-mile stretch between Amo and Clayton.

HCP&R began hosting programs periodically along the Vandalia Trail in 2020, including Roll & Stroll programs that specifically target those individuals who use wheelchairs and walkers or have other mobility challenges.



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Amenities

Each trailhead includes:

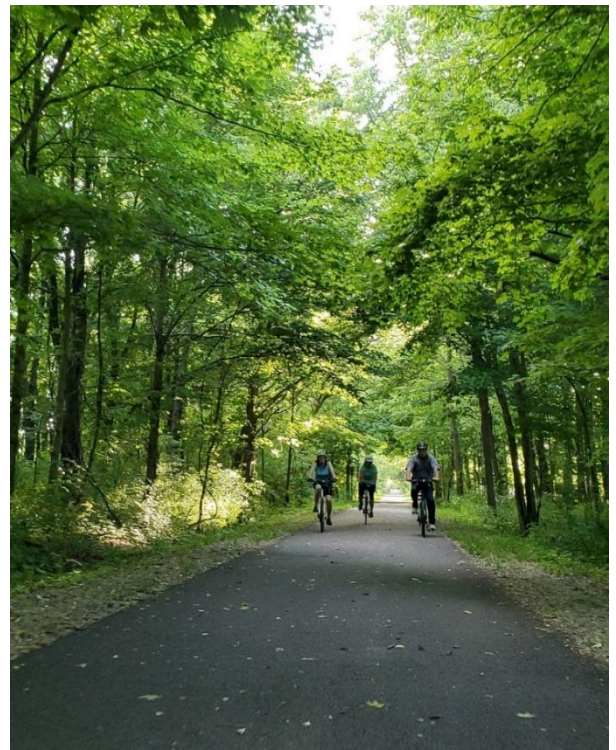
- Two modern ADA-accessible restrooms
- Two drinking fountains, one of which is ADA-accessible
- Trash and recycling receptacles
- Bicycle repair station and tire pump
- Interpretive signage
- Little Free Library
- Pet waste stations
- Equestrian loading and unloading zones

Visitation

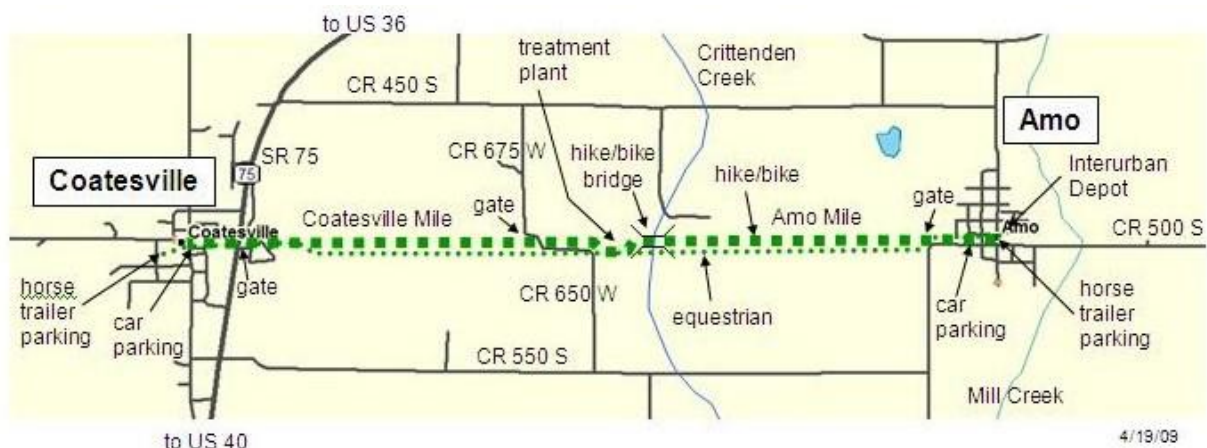
Traffic counters were installed at both trailheads in 2019, and a full year's worth of data was first available at the end of 2020.

Over 20,000 guests were counted at the Amo trailhead of the Vandalia Trail in 2020, and over 15,000 were counted at the Coatesville trailhead.

As HCP&R observed at McCloud Nature Park, April and May were the busiest months on the Vandalia Trail, presumably a result of people emerging from sheltering in place due to the COVID-19-pandemic. In April, 2,233 people utilized the trail in Amo, and 1,589 were counted in Coatesville. In May, the totals were 2,146 (Amo) and 1,822 (Coatesville).



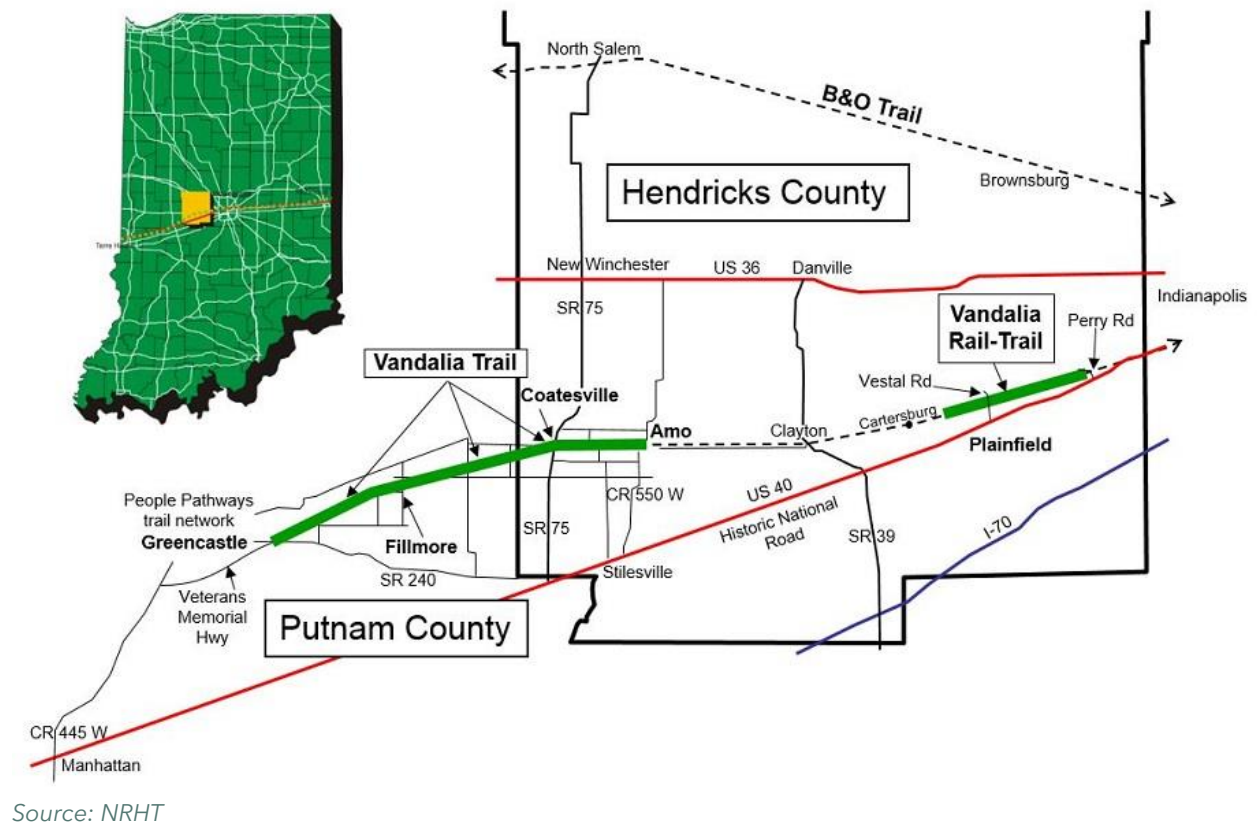
Bicyclists along the Vandalia Trail. Source: Greg Midgley



Detailed map of HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail. Source: NRHT



Vandalia Trail Locations





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W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

**4521 Gibbs Road
Danville, IN 46122**

The Park Board purchased a 140-acre parcel of land from John “Chub” and Lydia Gibbs in 2010 with the intention of building a new park commemorating Chub’s late grandfather, W.S. Gibbs. The parcel had mainly been used for agriculture but also included some forested areas and an ephemeral stream. Payments on the purchase were spread out over 10 years, with the final payment being made in January of 2019.

A master plan for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park was adopted by the Park Board on September 4, 2013, and was the culmination of a lengthy community planning process establishing a collective vision for W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park as a centerpiece of the Hendricks County Parks system that would serve Hendricks County residents and visitors for generations.

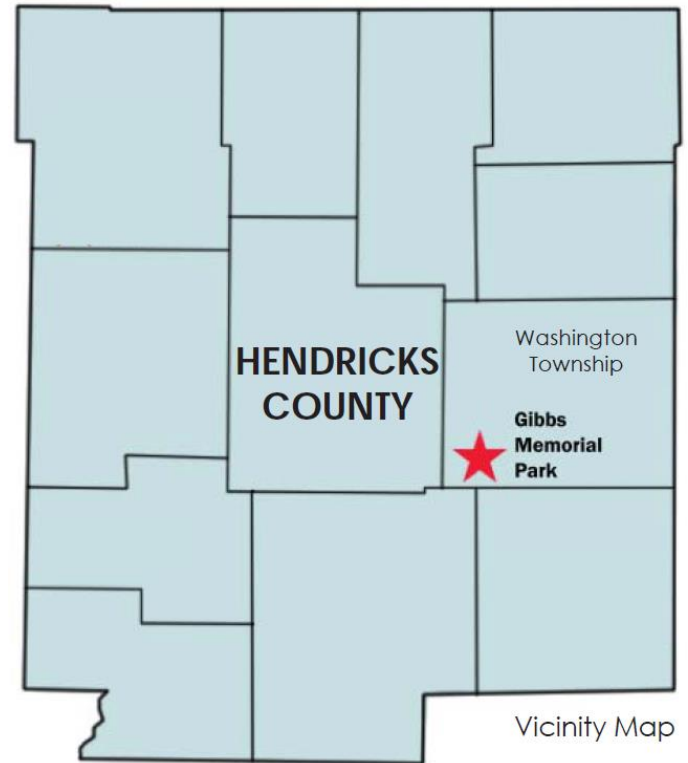
The master plan sought to harmonize natural systems with a place that accommodates a wide variety of community events and recreational activities unique to the region, a design that recalls the site’s rich agricultural heritage while looking to its future as a key community recreational asset, and a place that promotes active, healthy lifestyles for all ages.

The estimated cost of construction based on the 2013 master plan, however, was \$21,849,000, which proved to be an insurmountable hurdle.

In 2017, a special task force comprised of Park Board members and other members of the community created a much more feasible list of recommendations for opening W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

After the final payment was made on the property in 2019, the HCP&R maintenance crew began selectively clearing non-native invasive, dead, and undesirable trees and underbrush in approximately 20 acres of woodlands there, leaving the healthy native plants and trees for the park. That work is ongoing.

Combining elements of the 2013 master plan and the 2017 recommendations for opening, Green 3 Studio and Civil Engineering Consultants (CECON) developed a new concept plan for Phase I development of the park, which would encompass approximately 70 of the 140 acres. In November of 2019, the Park Board approved the final concept.





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On April 15, 2020, the Park Board awarded the construction contract to John Hall Construction, Inc. out of Plainfield. Construction began on June 16, 2020, and was completed by the end of 2020.

Simultaneous with construction, the HCP&R maintenance crew continued selectively clearing the woodlands while designing and implementing many of the park's amenities.

The Grand Opening of Phase I is expected to take place in 2021.

Amenities

John Hall Construction completed the following features of Phase I of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park:

- Park entrance off of Gibbs Road
- Approximately 1 mile of paved drive throughout the park
- Parking lots totaling 136 spaces
- 8 bicycle racks
- 3.8-acre and 1.1-acre ponds connected by a 24-inch bypass pipe (Note that HCP&R has an agreement with the Indiana DNR - Division of Fish & Wildlife for the state agency to stock the pond for consumptive fishing)
- A large hill made with the soil excavated from the pond that will serve as an overlook and a sledding hill



First day of construction at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park - June 16, 2020.

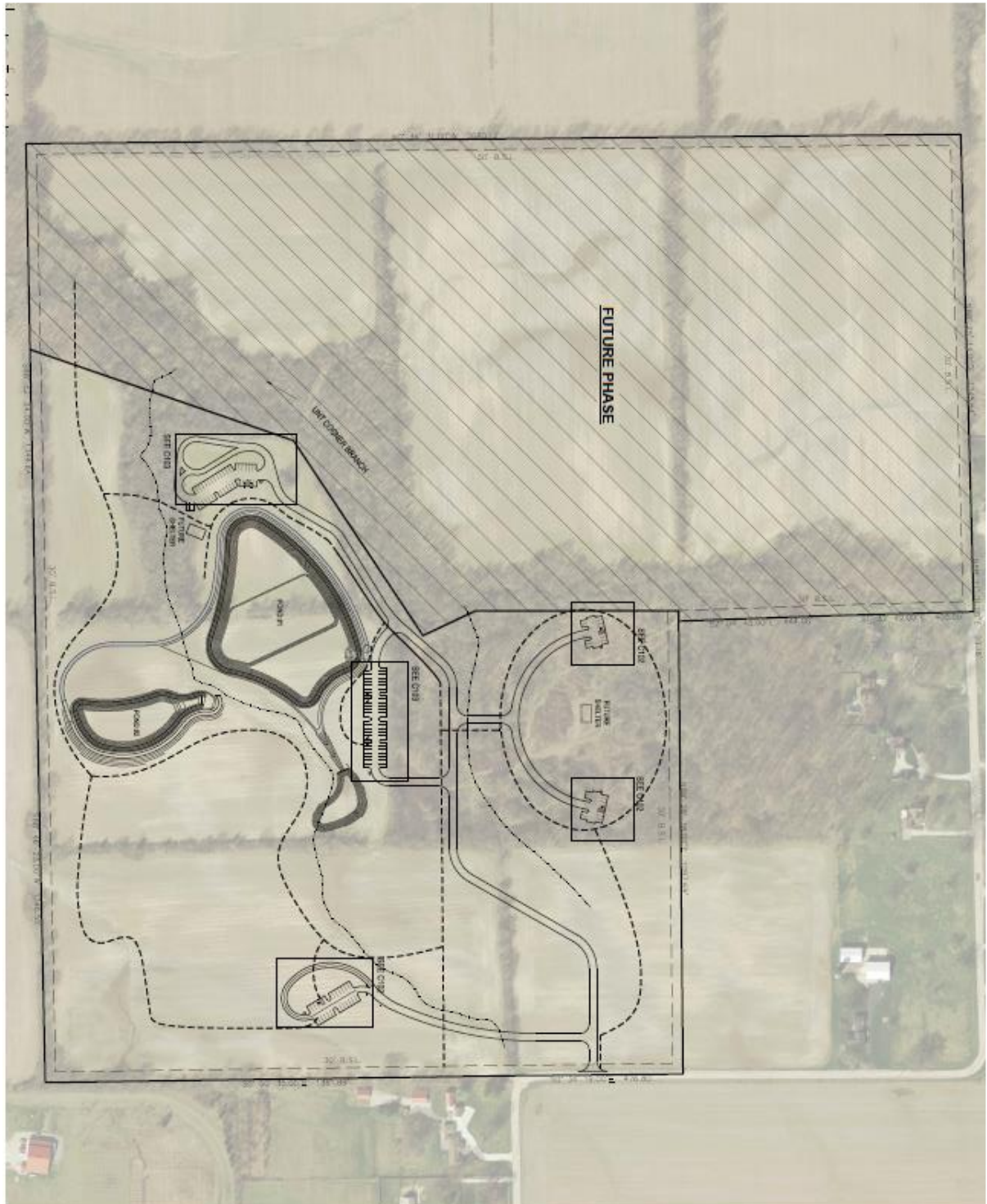
Amenities that have been or will be installed by the HCP&R maintenance crew in Phase I include:

- 18-hole disc golf course
- Nature-themed playground
- Approximately 2 miles of trails (crushed stone)
- Picnic areas
- Two large shelters
- An ADA-accessible dock for the pond
- Three bridges
- Green space (turf grass)
- Prairie grasses

Planning for Phase II will likely begin in 2022.



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Phase I development plans for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Source: CECON



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Sale of Sodalis Nature Park Amenities

In 1992, the Indianapolis Airport Authority (IAA) began working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to mitigate the consequences that development projects can have on roosting and foraging habitats of the federally endangered Indiana bat. Under the guidance of the USFWS, the IAA developed a Habitat Conservation Program that protects allocated land, allows scientific research, and establishes conservation and monitoring practices for both the bats and their roosting and foraging habitats.

Under the conservation program, which has become one of the most successful habitat restoration projects in the nation, the IAA acquired over 2,200 acres of land located in Marion and Hendricks Counties. The permanently protected areas support wetland conservation in addition to providing a protected habitat for the bats.



In 2009, the IAA and HCP&R - working with USFWS to ensure that a proposed park would be compatible with the area's core conservation mission - entered into a 20-year lease agreement to establish a 210-acre Sodalis Nature Park within the permanently protected area. The unique partnership allowed visitors the rare opportunity to enjoy a robust, permanently protected wildlife habitat - something they could not experience at any other park in the region, particularly one located in a major metropolitan area.

The park is named for the federally endangered Indiana bat, *Myotis sodalis*, which inhabits wooded areas in and around the park. Sodalis Nature Park is located on lands that have been protected for the Indiana bat under a Habitat Conservation Plan that was created to ensure that the colony of Indiana bats near the airport can survive in the midst of development in the area.

Sodalis Nature Park opened to the public on May 13, 2011, and was operated and maintained by HCP&R on property owned by the IAA. The park encompasses about 210 acres of land that were previously closed to the public and that serve as a refuge for more than 100 species of wildlife, including the Indiana bat.

HCP&R implemented several amenities within the park, including a shelter, wildlife observation deck, trails, picnic areas, year-round educational programs, and a 5.5-acre pond with an ADA-accessible fishing pier without detracting from the value of the area as Indiana bat habitat.

The Town of Plainfield purchased the park land from the IAA as part of a larger 1,800-acre parcel in 2018. On May 1, 2019, the Town of Plainfield assumed operations of Sodalis Nature Park.



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The Town purchased the amenities at Sodalis Nature Park from HCP&R for \$300,000 on the condition that the money be used toward the development of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park since Plainfield residents are likely to visit the park regularly, given its proximity to the town.

That money was held by the Hendricks County Auditor's Office until 2020, when about \$100,000 of it was put toward Phase I construction costs of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. The remaining \$200,000 is being saved for future expenses associated with the new park.



Sodalis Nature Park. Source: Silvia Schneirov

Effects on HCP&R

The addition of 140 acres of property for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park and the subtraction of Sodalis Nature Park's 210 acres results in a net loss of 70 acres of property that is operated by HCP&R but an increase of 140 acres (70 acres being developed in Phase I) of park land available to the public.

The \$300,000 payment is very helpful in the Phase I development of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park - a project estimated to cost about \$2 million.

The change alleviates a significant hurdle of HCP&R having two parks located in opposite corners of the county. The department's only maintenance hub is at McCloud Nature Park in the northwest corner of the county, so any employees, heavy equipment, tools, landscaping materials, etc. had to be transported from McCloud to Sodalis, about 45 minutes away, in the far southeast corner of the county and then 45 minutes back to McCloud each day.

Family programming was a challenge, too, without an enclosed building at Sodalis Nature Park to protect staff and park guests from inclement weather. The naturalists, of course, had the same drive time as the maintenance crew back and forth from the two parks.

These two issues will still exist with W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, but the park is much closer to McCloud, and it's only 10 minutes away from the main office.

Because HCP&R did not own the land where Sodalis Nature Park is located, no permanent structures other than one shelter were built there since any change in property ownership - such as the Town of Plainfield purchasing the property - could result in HCP&R no longer operating the park.

HCP&R owns the land where W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park is located, so permanent structures can be built there when funding comes available, which could permanently eliminate these two problems in the future.



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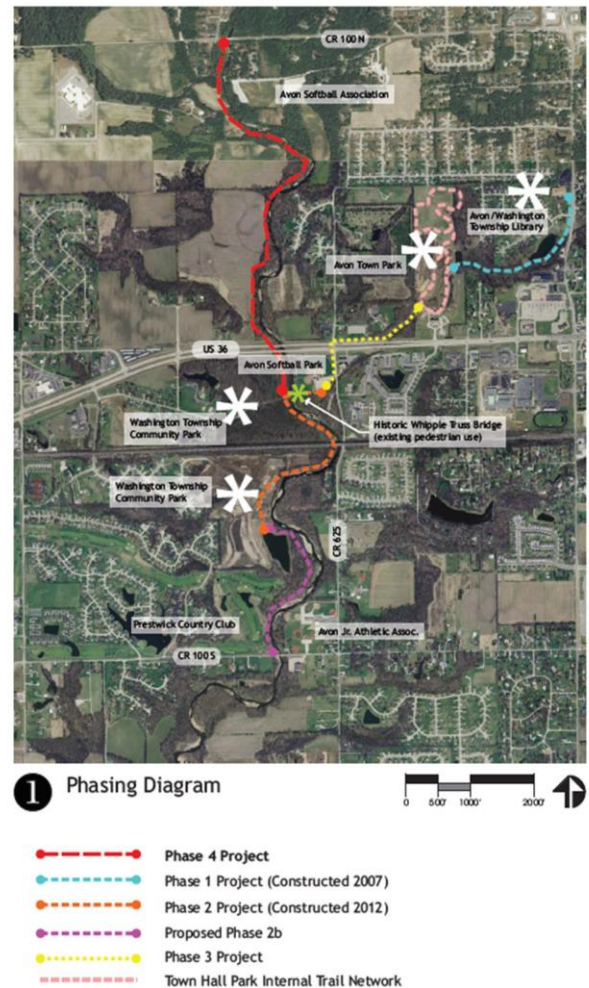
Other Hendricks County Parks and Trails

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.

The following list catalogues recreation amenities within Hendricks County that are offered by entities other than HCP&R.

Avon Parks & Recreation

- **Avon Town Hall Park**
 - 83 acres
 - 2 miles of paved walking trails
 - ½-mile Story Walk
 - 9-acre Avon Town Hall Park Lake
 - 3-acre Sycamore Lake
 - Small pond
 - Catch-and-release fishing
 - 2 playgrounds
 - 9-hole disc golf course
 - Outdoor RC race track
 - Shelter
 - Picnic tables
 - Ping pong tables
 - Bocce court
 - Angel of Hope
- **Bicentennial Trail**
 - 1-mile paved trail from CR 200 N. to the B&O Trail
- **Gable Park**
 - 10 acres
 - 3-acre catch-and-release fishing pond
- **White Lick Creek Trail**
 - North-south paved trail that follows White Lick Creek from Plainfield through Avon
 - Some sections still under construction or in planning stages
- **WWII Memorial Park**
 - 1 acre
 - Honors WWII veterans



White Lick Creek Trail map. Source: Town of Avon



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Washington Township Parks & Recreation (Avon)

- **Murphy Park**

- 43 acres
- Under construction
- Phase I planned amenities:
 - Inclusive playground
 - Recreation/ detention pond
 - Pedestrian connection to AJAA outdoor sports complex
 - Aquatics facility
 - Multi-use fields
 - Native restoration areas
 - Landscaping

- **Pecar Park**

- 46 acres
- Nature Center
- Playground
- 8 primitive tent camping sites, open Memorial Day to Labor Day
- Raccoon Lagoon catch-and-release fishing pond
- Kayaks available for rent
- Low ropes course
- Bird aviary

- **Washington Township Park**

- 160 acres, divided into an upper and lower park
- Upper Park
 - 2 covered picnic facilities
 - Gazebo
 - 2 shelters
 - 5 miles of hiking trails (paved and natural surfaces)
 - "Learning Trail"
 - Playgrounds for a variety of age groups
 - Sand volleyball court
 - Basketball court
 - 1½-acre DNR-stocked fishing pond
 - Story Walk
 - Dog park
- Lower Park
 - Splash pad
 - Playground
 - 2 shelters
 - Pavilion Center with rentable conference rooms



Washington Township Park Pavilion Center. Source: Washington Township Parks & Recreation



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Central Indiana Land Trust (Avon)

- **Burnett Woods Nature Preserve**
 - 83 acres
 - 1.5-mile loop trail (natural surfaces)

Brownsburg Parks & Recreation

- **Arbuckle Acres Park**
 - 52 acres
 - Access to White Lick Creek
 - 1.3 miles of paved trails
 - Baseball complex
 - Basketball courts
 - Tennis courts
 - Playground
 - 6 shelters
 - Pavilion
 - Bundy Lodge
- **Cardinal Park**
 - 14 acres
 - Trailhead to B&O Trail
 - One mile of paved trail
 - Dog park
 - Phase III construction scheduled to begin in 2021
 - Inclusive/sensory playground
 - Shelter/pavilion
- **Stephens Park**
 - 4 acres
 - Shelter
 - Swingset
 - Playground
 - Updates scheduled to be completed in 2021
 - 6 pickleball courts
 - Bocce courts
 - Inclusive playground
 - Nature play area
 - Upgrades to shelter



Burnett Woods in Avon. Source: Visit Hendricks County



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

- **Williams Park**

- 77 acres
- Watermill Splash Pad
- Blast Off Playground
- Veterans Memorial
- 1.6 miles of trails (paved and crushed stone)
- 7 shelters
- Additional playground
- Outdoor classroom
- 3 pollinator gardens
- Access to White Lick Creek
- Basketball courts

- **Future Parks**

- Virgil Park, 9145 E. CR 300 N., 6.67 acres
- 315 W. Main Street, 51 acres
- West Wynne Property

- **B&O Trail**

- 2.8-mile section of paved trail

- **Bicentennial Trail**

- 1-mile paved trail from CR 200 N. in Avon to the B&O Trail

- **Bulldog Way**

- 1-mile section of paved trail

- **Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Trail**

- 0.77-mile section of paved trail

- **White Lick Creek Greenway Trail**

- 0.4 miles of trail
- Under construction



Blast Off Playground in Williams Park

B&O Trail Association (Brownsburg)

- **B&O Trail**

- 6.1 miles of paved trail (including Brownsburg section)

Lincoln Township (Brownsburg)

- **Lincoln Township Park**

- 3.5 acres
- 0.33 mile of paved trails
- 2 baseball/softball fields
- 2 soccer fields



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Town of Clayton

- **Lambert Park**
 - 6 acres
 - Playground
 - Gazebo
 - 2 shelters

Town of Coatesville

- **Coatesville Park**
 - 1 acre
 - Playground

Danville Parks & Recreation

- **Blanton Woods Nature Park**
 - 53 acres
 - 5+ miles of wooded trails
 - Shelter
 - Picnic tables
 - Blanton House available for rental
- **Bosstick Gym / Danville Athletic Club / Hargrave Gym**
 - 5,000-square-foot fitness center
 - Two gyms
 - Indoor basketball courts
- **Community Gardens**
- **Ellis Park**
 - 49 acres
 - Access to White Lick Creek
 - Playscape Playground
 - Gill Family Aquatic Center
 - 0.75 mile of paved trails connecting to Gary Eakin Community Park and Blanton Woods Nature Park
 - 6 baseball/softball fields
 - Basketball courts
 - 2 football fields
 - 2 tennis courts
 - 4 pickleball courts
 - Volleyball pit
 - Disc golf course



Ellis Park in Danville. Source: Danville Chamber of Commerce



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- 2 shelters
- Gazebo
- Amphitheater
- Train Station, building available for rental
- **Gary Eakin Community Park**
 - 42 acres
 - Paved trails connecting to Ellis Park
 - Disc golf course
- **Jack Willard Community Park**
 - 1 acre
 - Firefighter-themed playground

Town of Jamestown

- **Pleasant Acres Nature Park**
 - 16 acres
 - 24' x 60' shelter
 - Gazebo
 - 2 miles of paved trails

Liberty Township (Cartersburg)

- **Liberty Township Park**
 - 5.4 acres
 - Shelter
 - Playground

Town of Lizton

- **Lions Club Park**
 - 3.6 acres
 - 2 baseball/softball fields
 - Playground
 - Basketball goal
 - Shelter

Marion Township (New Winchester)

- **Marion Township Park**
 - 10 acres
 - Shelter
 - Playground
 - 3 baseball/softball fields



Lizton Lions Club Park. Source: Lizton Lions Club Facebook page



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Town of North Salem

- **North Salem Community Park**
 - 3 acres
 - Playground
 - Shelter

Pittsboro Parks & Recreation

- **Dr. Malcom O. Scamahorn Community Park**
 - 18 acres
 - 0.33 mile of walking track
 - Playground
 - Basketball courts
 - Baseball/softball fields
 - Soccer fields
 - 2 shelters
 - Legion Building and Scout Building available to rent
- **Scott Park**
 - 1.7 acres
 - Baseball/softball field
 - Basketball court
 - Playground
 - Shelter
- **Esther Park**
 - 13.1 acres
 - Undeveloped green space



Scamahorn Park in Pittsboro. Source: Town of Pittsboro

Plainfield Parks & Recreation

- **Al & Jan Barker Sports Complex**
 - 58 acres
 - 5 baseball/softball fields
 - 17 soccer fields
 - Access to White Lick Creek
- **Anderson Park**
 - 7 acres
 - Shelter
 - Anderson Skate Park
- **Bob Ward Park**
 - 1 acre
 - Gazebo
 - Green space



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- **Franklin Park**

- 35 acres
- 2 shelters
- 4 baseball/softball fields
- 2 tennis courts

- **Friendship Gardens**

- 13 acres
- Gazebo
- Flower garden
- Waterfall
- Access to White Lick Creek

- **Richard A. Carlucci Recreation & Aquatic Center**

- 20 acres
- 113,000-square-foot indoor recreation center
 - 20,000-square-foot indoor aquatic center
 - 5,472-square-foot leisure pool
 - Multitude of sports and exercise equipment and areas
- Splash Island outdoor aquatic center



Splash Island in Plainfield. Source: Visit Hendricks County

- **Sodalis Nature Park**

- 210 acres
- 3.5 miles of trails (crushed stone and natural surfaces)
- 5.5-acre pond
- Catch-and-release fishing
- 24' x 44' shelter
- ADA-accessible fishing dock
- ADA-accessible picnic area
- Wildlife viewing platform



Sodalis Nature Park. Source: Silvia Schnierov

- **Swinford Park**

- 27 acres
- Shelter
- Playgrounds
- 4 baseball/softball fields
- Volleyball court
- Horseshoe pit
- Dog park

- **Talon Stream Park**

- 13 acres
- 0.5-mile paved trail
- Two covered seating areas
- Shelter
- Access to White Lick Creek



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- **Plainfield Trail System**

- Comprised of a multitude of paved trails of varying lengths, including 3.3 miles of the Vandalia Trail
- Over 20 miles of trails within the Town of Plainfield

Guilford Township (Plainfield)

- **Hummel Park**

- 205 acres
- 3 miles of paved trails
- 8 shelters
- 4 playgrounds
- 4 baseball/softball fields
- Soccer fields
- Basketball courts
- Outdoor performing arts center
- 4,000-square-foot community center
- Splash pad



Source: Hummel Park

Town of Stilesville

- **Stilesville Town Park**

- 1.25 acres
- Shelter
- Basketball court
- Playground

Other Recreation Opportunities in Hendricks County

There are a multitude of additional recreation opportunities within Hendricks County that are owned by individuals, groups, or organizations other than public parks departments. These include, but are not limited to:

- Hendricks Regional Health YMCA, Avon
- Avon Softball Park
- Brian Burch Memorial Sports Complex, Amo
- Several golf courses around the county
- Several youth sports leagues around the county
- Twin Bridges Archery, Danville



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ADA Accessibility Compliance

The mission of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 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 U.S. President George H.W. Bush 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, as well as guaranteeing access to public accommodations such as restaurants, stores, hotels, and other types of buildings to which the public has access.

The 2018 American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 10.8% of the population in Hendricks County has a physical or mental disability.

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

ADA Coordinator

On December 13, 2011, the Hendricks County Commissioners issued Resolution No. 11-09, which appointed the Assistant County Engineer as the ADA Coordinator for all Hendricks County Government offices.

The Assistant County Engineer is currently Mr. Kim Galloway, 355 S. Washington Street, Danville, IN 46122; (317) 745-9236; kgalloway@co.hendricks.in.us.

Hendricks County's ADA Implementation and Transition Plan can be found online at:
https://www.co.hendricks.in.us/egov/documents/1495197073_66107.pdf

Public Notice of ADA Requirements

All of Hendricks County's policies are available through the Hendricks County Commissioners' Office located within the Hendricks County Government Center at 355 S. Washington Street, Danville, IN.

Additionally, they can be found online at:
<https://www.co.hendricks.in.us/topic/index.php?topicid=174&structureid=15>

ADA Grievance Procedure

The Hendricks County Grievance Procedure, most recently revised on May 18, 2017, is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by Hendricks County Government.

The complaint should be filed in writing with the ADA Coordinator. It should be submitted by the complainant and/or his or her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation.



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Within 30 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator or his/her designee will contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible solution. Within 15 calendar days of the contact, the ADA Coordinator or his/her designee will respond in writing. The response will explain the County's position and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by the ADA Coordinator or his/her designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his or her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator within 30 calendar days after the receipt of the response to the Board of Hendricks County Commissioners or their designee.

Within 30 calendar days after the receipt of the appeal, the complainant may wish to be heard at a designated meeting of the Board of Hendricks County Commissioners, meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, to discuss the complaint and possible resolution. Within 15 calendar days, the Board of Hendricks County Commissioners or their designee will respond in writing with a final resolution of the complaint.

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. However, HCP&R is currently investigating the cost of installing a chip-and-seal surface on all roadways and parking lots to improve accessibility.

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 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 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 provided inside and outside of the Nature Center 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 are located in and around the picnic shelter.



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Wetland Observation Deck

In the lower section of the park, adjacent to Big Walnut Creek, is a large wooden observation deck overlooking a wetland habitat. The deck is accessible to wheelchairs, walkers, and other park guests with mobility impairments. However, the nearby parking lot is loose gravel, and a short portion of a compacted earth trail must be traveled to access the observation deck.

Trails

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

There have been discussions by the Park Board over the years about paving the trail from the Nature Center, around the arboretum, to the truss bridge to improve accessibility, but so far, that project has been cost-prohibitive.

Vandalia Trail

The entire 4.1 miles of the Vandalia Trail that HCP&R operates is paved, making it fully accessible to those with mobility impairments.

Both trailheads – one in Amo and one in Coatesville – have paved parking lots with marked and striped accessible parking spots as well as ADA-accessible modern restroom facilities and drinking fountains.

Programming

HCP&R currently offers a wide variety of programming for adults and children, including activities held at McCloud Nature Park, the McCloud Nature Center, and along the Vandalia Trail. Programming is also held both indoors and outdoors at area public libraries, area schools, and other parks that are not operated by HCP&R (in cooperation with each park's hosting agency).

It is HCP&R's desire to accommodate those with disabilities in all programming activities. In general, the programs held at the McCloud Nature Center or at other indoor facilities can be adapted to accommodate those with disabilities. The department has successfully made these adaptations on multiple occasions 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 Nature Park terrain, it is unlikely that the park will ever be fully accessible. Measures to add accessible routes to those amenities that could be accessible would open additional programming opportunities at the park.



Public Participation

Survey Summary

A random sample of 2,525 Hendricks County residents was selected and offered an online and a paper survey to complete for this Comprehensive Master Plan. HCP&R received 563 usable responses, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of +/- 4.03%, allowing HCP&R to generalize the sample responses to the entire Hendricks County population.

Additionally, online and paper surveys were made available to anyone who wanted to participate, creating a non-random sample of 245 responses.

Finally, a public input meeting was held in December of 2020 to allow for even more feedback from the community.



The survey results revealed that Hendricks County residents find parks to be important to themselves personally and to the community. They overwhelmingly support the eastern expansion of the Vandalia Trail, and trails are their favorite park feature.

A majority of respondents have never been to McCloud Nature Park or the Vandalia Trail, nor had they heard about the construction of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park until receiving the survey. This indicates a problem with the way HCP&R communicates with the Hendricks County population and markets their properties and programs.

Of the guests who have visited McCloud and the Vandalia Trail, the vast majority are happy with the properties.

Hendricks County residents visit parks for what is located there (trails, nature, natural and man-made features), as opposed to what programming is taking place there at any given time. Family programming is not particularly important to people in Hendricks County. People much prefer to visit parks on their own time and direction.

Survey Methodology

Mixed-mode surveys were used as a means of collecting public input for this document. The Tailored Design Method was utilized, as described in *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, 4th ed. (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2014).

An online survey was created through Survey Monkey and included 17 questions that were developed by HCP&R Superintendent Ryan Lemley, HCP&R Assistant Superintendent Eric Ivie, and Park Board members Bill DuMond, Brad Eisenhart, and Paul Miner. A paper version of the survey was also created, asking the same questions.



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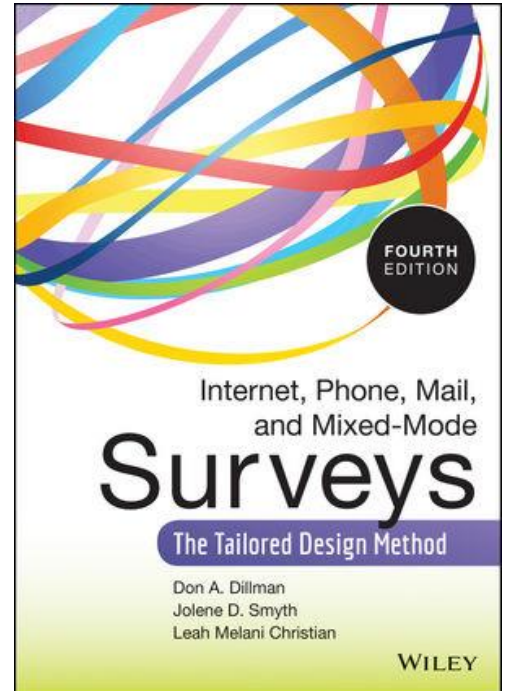
Random Sample

The most recent U.S. Census Bureau data indicated that there are 58,078 households in Hendricks County.

To collect a random sample with a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval (or margin of error) of 5% -- the desired confidence level and interval to allow generalizations about the entire Hendricks County population -- it was determined that HCP&R would need 382 responses to the survey.

HCP&R's 2011-2015 Comprehensive Master Plan also utilized the Tailored Design Method, although with a slightly different method of execution, and the survey response rate was 2.7%. HCP&R's 2016-2020 Comprehensive Master Plan only used a non-random sample and received 109 responses to an online survey on Survey Monkey. The survey administrators did not receive any paper responses.

Dillman, Smyth, and Christian's (2014) descriptions of a multitude of mixed-mode surveys conducted by the authors and by other organizations reported a wide range of response rates, one as high as 78%. Many of the cited surveys, however, included financial incentives for the respondents -- something that, as a government agency, HCP&R could not duplicate.



HCP&R decided to conservatively estimate a 15% response rate to the Comprehensive Master Plan survey. If that response rate could be achieved, and with 382 survey responses being desired, around 2,500 survey invitations would need to be sent.

HCP&R then purchased a mailing list of every 23rd household in Hendricks County to create a random sample size of 2,525 households. Resident names were not included in the mailing list -- only addresses. This was specifically requested to ensure the anonymity of each survey respondent.

HCP&R created a unique six-digit survey code for each mailing address. The six digits meant nothing, other than to be able to track which residences in the random sample responded to the survey. Doing this allowed HCP&R to target only the residences that had not responded when sending follow-up correspondence, saving HCP&R money and preventing the harassment of residents who had already responded to the survey.

People who wanted to take the survey but who were not part of the random sample could enter their home zip code instead of a six-digit survey code into the online survey, which would indicate to HCP&R that these responses were from a non-random sample.

A short URL was created to provide respondents with easy access to the online survey based on the URL printed on a postcard. The short URL was successfully tested multiple times on multiple devices prior to the first mailing.



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Non-Random Sample

A handful of non-random sample responses trickled in while HCP&R focused on the random sample, but HCP&R's effort to collect non-random samples began in earnest in late September and early October of 2020.

HCP&R created a page on their website with a link to the online survey and a downloadable paper survey. That page was advertised on the department's Facebook page and then shared with local media (see Appendix C) and in a multitude of local chatter groups on Facebook that represent Hendricks County communities.

This process was repeated weekly throughout the month of October.

Additionally, 250 paper surveys were printed out and placed at the McCloud Nature Center and at the HCP&R main office. Visitors at both locations were encouraged by HCP&R staff members to complete the survey.

An email with a link to the online survey was sent to the Hendricks County Council, the Hendricks County Commissioners, and the HCP&R staff, inviting all of them to respond to the survey as stakeholders. Paper copies of the survey were also provided to all three entities.

First Mailing

On August 24, 2020, postcards inviting Hendricks County residents to take the survey online were mailed to all 2,525 households on the mailing list. The postcards informed the recipient of the purpose of the survey, the anonymity of their responses, the short URL to access the survey, a unique six-digit survey code to enter online when responding, and a request that the adult (age 18 or over) with the most recent birthday be the one to complete the survey. Additionally, Assistant Superintendent Eric Ivie's phone number and email address were provided in case recipients had questions or concerns or preferred a paper survey be mailed to them.

It quickly came to HCP&R's attention that the short URL that was printed on the postcards no longer provided access to the survey. In response to this issue, HCP&R published a different link to the survey on its Facebook page and website, and it sent out a press release to all local media (see Appendix C). HCP&R also fielded several phone calls and emails about the problem, and those citizens were provided with the correct link to the online survey.

Additionally, five people requested paper copies of surveys, which were sent to them along with a return envelope that included prepaid postage. All five of those surveys were completed and returned to HCP&R.

The first round of postcards resulted in 48 responses from the random sample for a response rate of 1.8%. Additionally, a total of 53 responses from the non-random sample were received.

Second Mailing

On September 10, 2020, 2,477 follow-up postcards were mailed out to the random sample, serving as a reminder to complete the survey and as acknowledgement of the failed short URL in the first mailing, as well as providing recipients with a URL that works. The same instructions and language about anonymity of responses, the unique six-digit survey code, and contact information for HCP&R from the first mailing was included in the second mailing, too.



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Three more paper surveys were returned after they had been requested.

The second round of postcards resulted in 101 responses from the random sample, increasing the response rate to 5.7%. Twenty-seven (27) responses were received from the non-random sample.

Third Mailing

On September 28, 2020, a third and final mailing was sent out to 2,376 addresses in the random sample who still had not responded to the survey. This mailing was sent in a business envelope and contained a cover letter, a paper survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. The cover letter asked recipients to respond either to the online survey or by way of the paper survey. The same instructions and language about anonymity of responses, the unique six-digit survey code, and contact information for HCP&R from the first two mailings was included in the third mailing, too.

The third mailing resulted in 414 responses from the random sample and 165 responses from the non-random sample. Combining the responses from all three mailings, HCP&R received a total of **563 random sample responses** for a final response rate of **21.6%**. The department received a total of **245 non-random sample responses**.

The survey was closed on October 31, 2020.

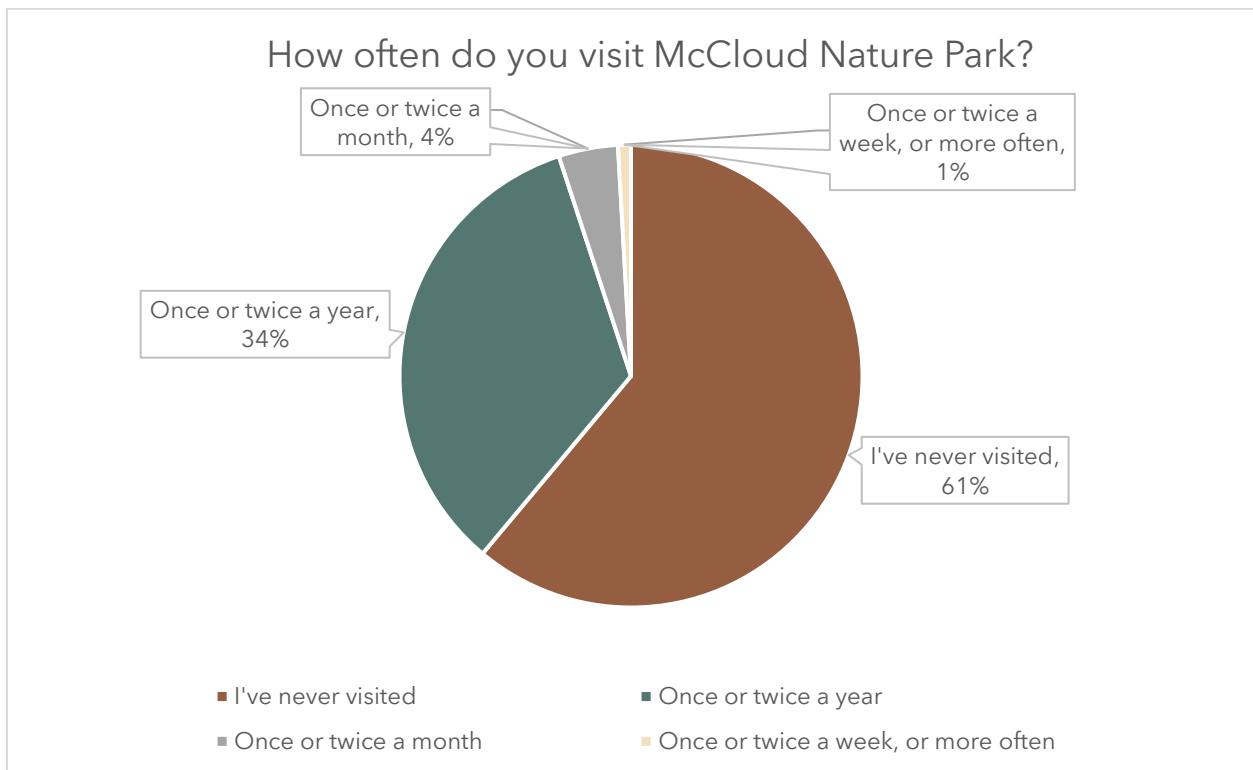


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Survey Results

Random Sample

Q: How often do you visit McCloud Nature Park?

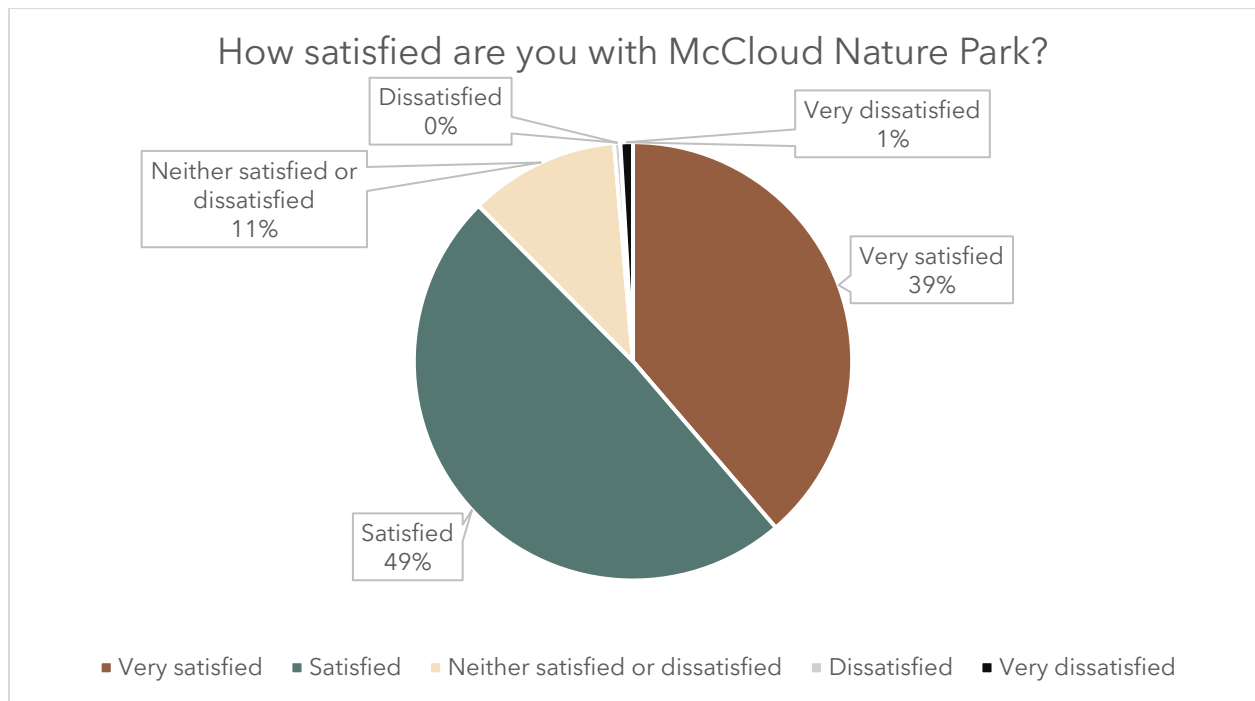


Response	Number	Percentage
I've never visited	339	61.08%
Once or twice a year	188	33.87%
Once or twice a month	23	4.14%
Once or twice a week, or more often	5	0.90%
	555	



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Q. How satisfied are you with McCloud Nature Park?

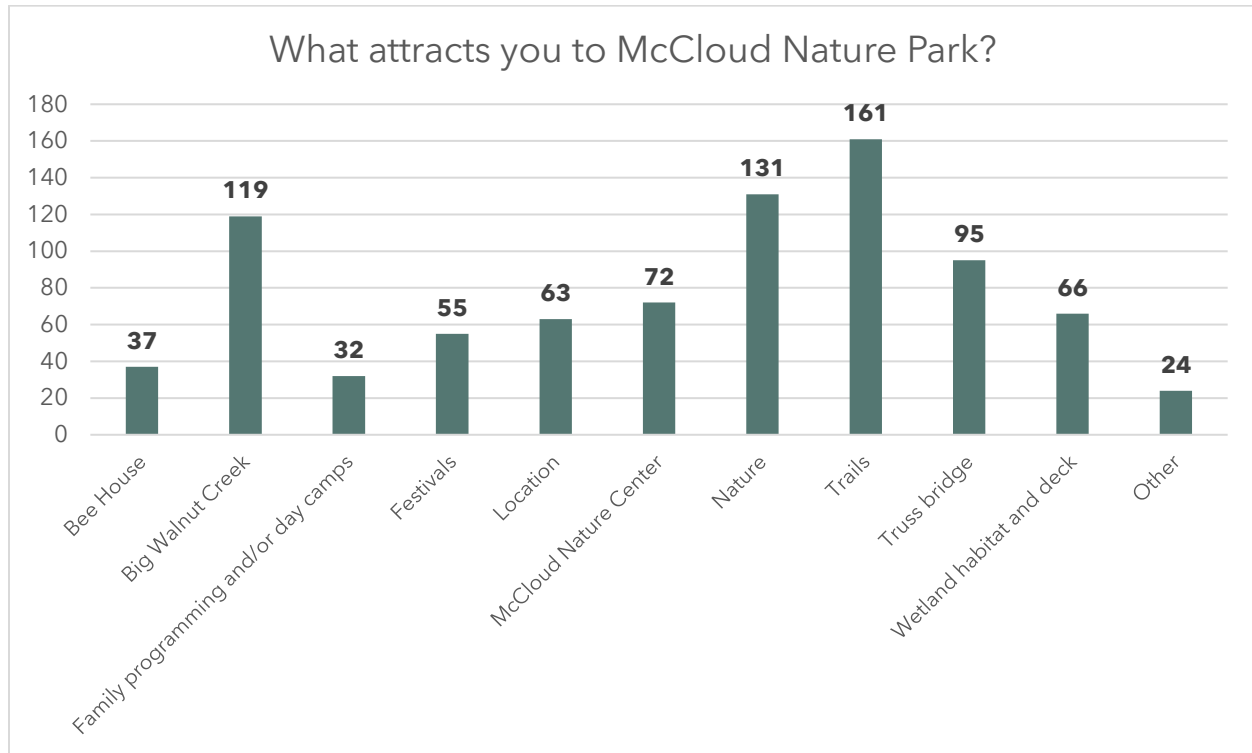


Response	Number	Percentage
Very satisfied	84	38.71%
Satisfied	106	48.85%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	24	11.06%
Dissatisfied	1	0.46%
Very dissatisfied	2	0.92%
	217	



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Q. What attracts you to McCloud Nature Park? (select all that apply)

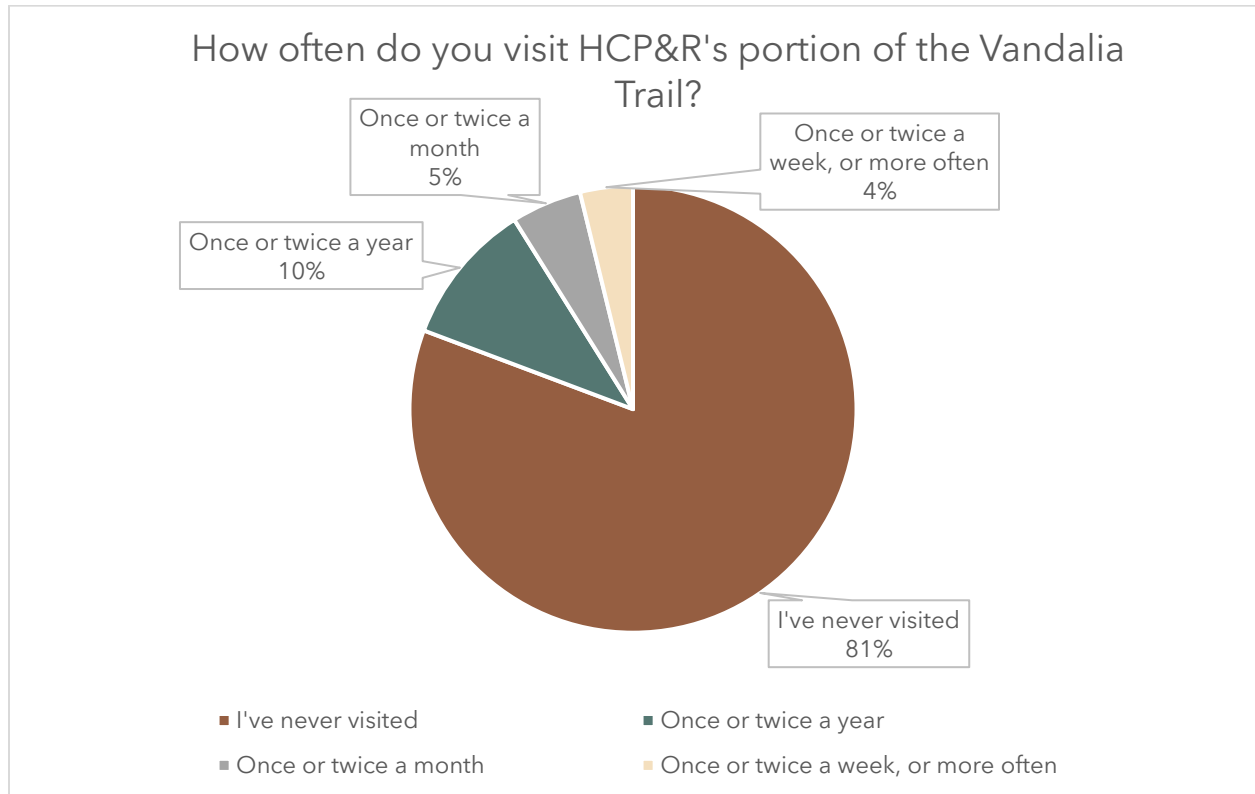


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>
Bee House	37
Big Walnut Creek	119
Family programming and/or day camps	32
Festivals	55
Location	63
McCloud Nature Center	72
Nature	131
Trails	161
Truss bridge	95
Wetland habitat and deck	66
Other	24



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Q. How often do you visit HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail?

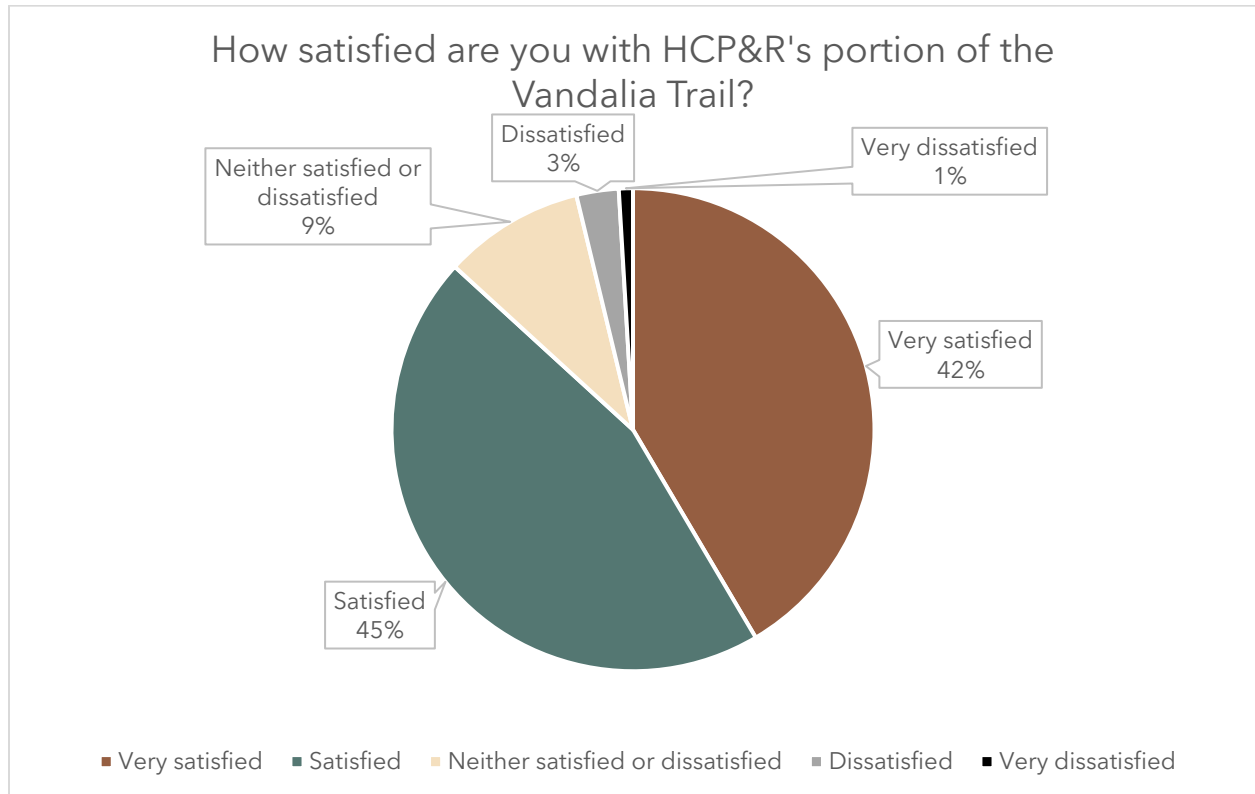


Response	Number	Percentage
I've never visited	444	80.73%
Once or twice a year	57	10.36%
Once or twice a month	28	5.09%
Once or twice a week, or more often	21	3.82%
	550	



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Q. How satisfied are you with HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail?

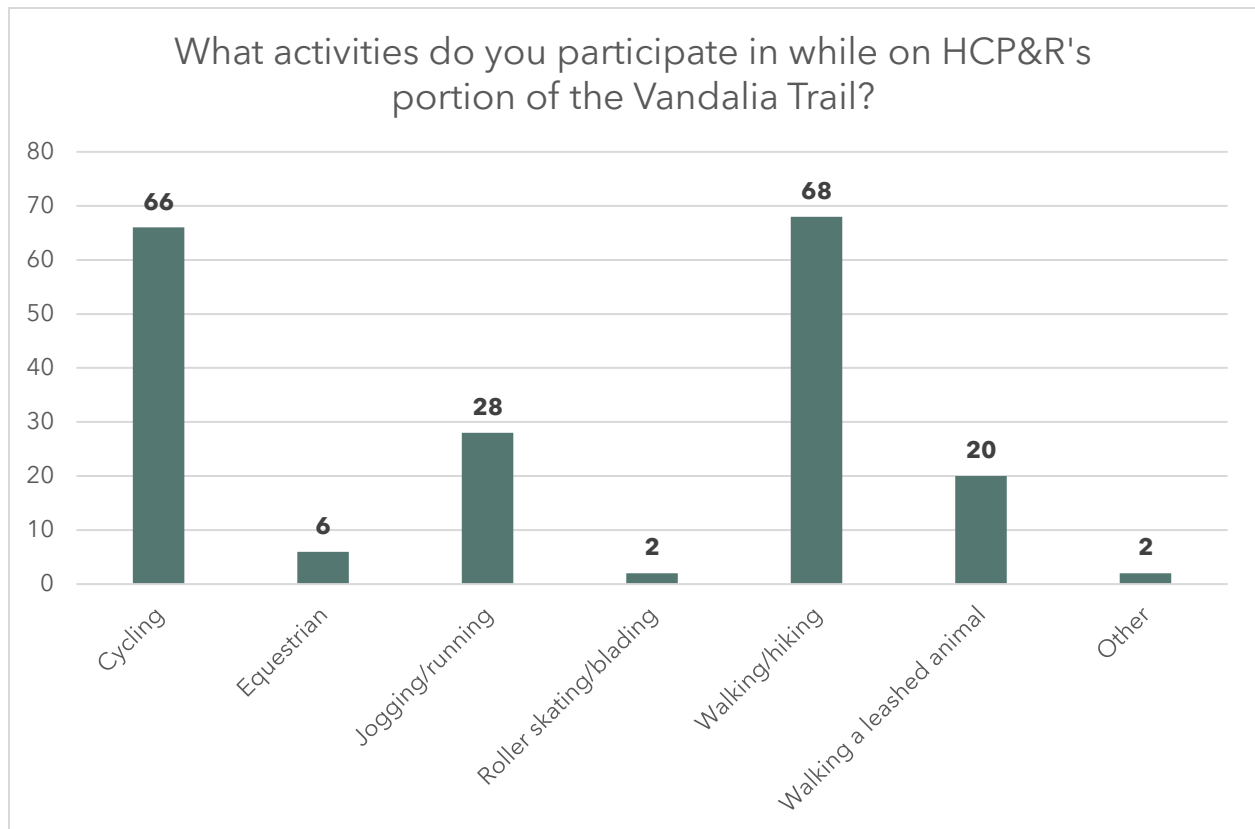


Response	Number	Percentage
Very satisfied	44	41.51%
Satisfied	48	45.28%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	10	9.43%
Dissatisfied	3	2.83%
Very dissatisfied	1	0.94%
	106	



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Q. What activities do you participate in while on HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail? (check all that apply)

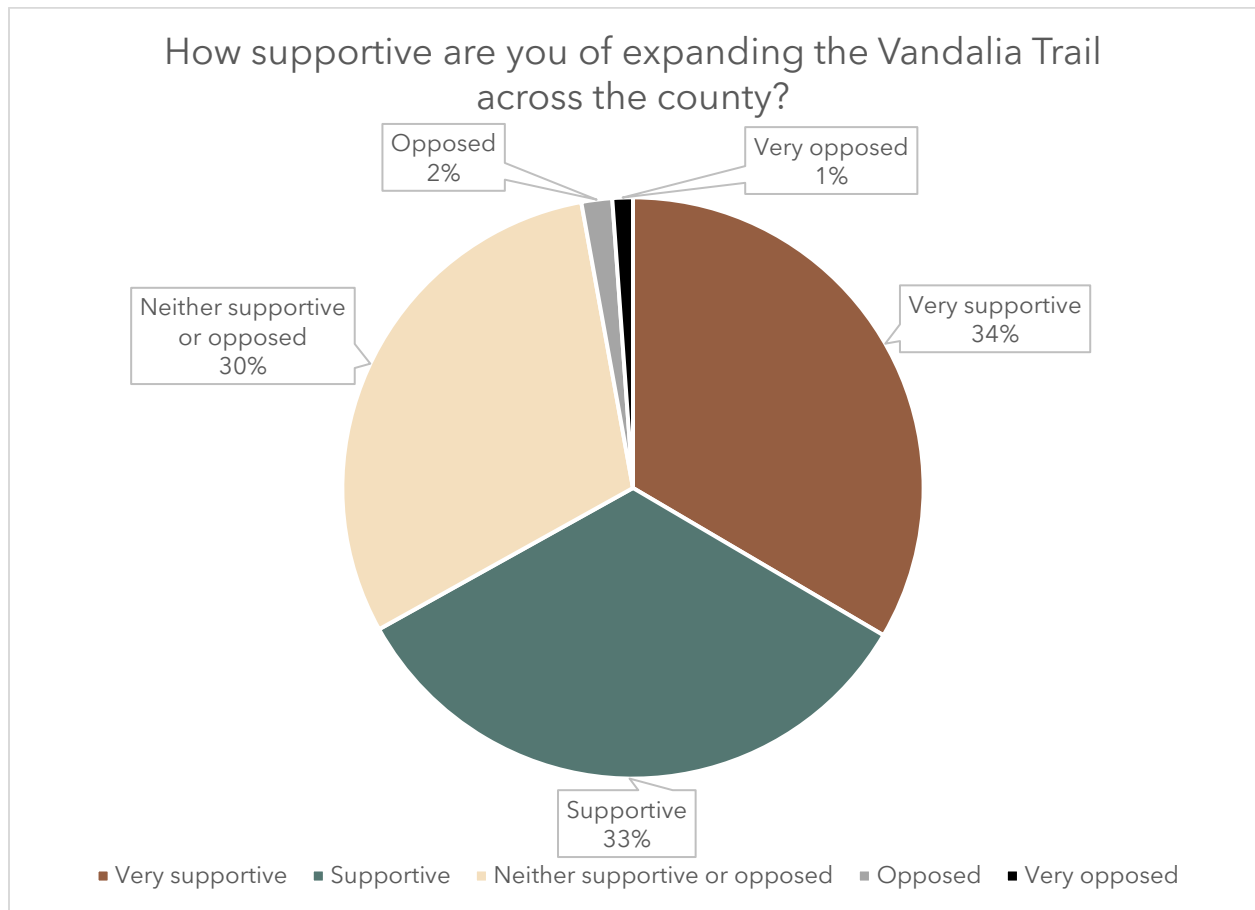


Response	Number
Cycling	66
Equestrian	6
Jogging/running	28
Roller skating/blading	2
Walking/hiking	68
Walking a leashed animal	20
Other	2



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Q. How supportive are you of the plan to expand the Vandalia Trail east from Amo through Clayton and Cartersburg into Plainfield?

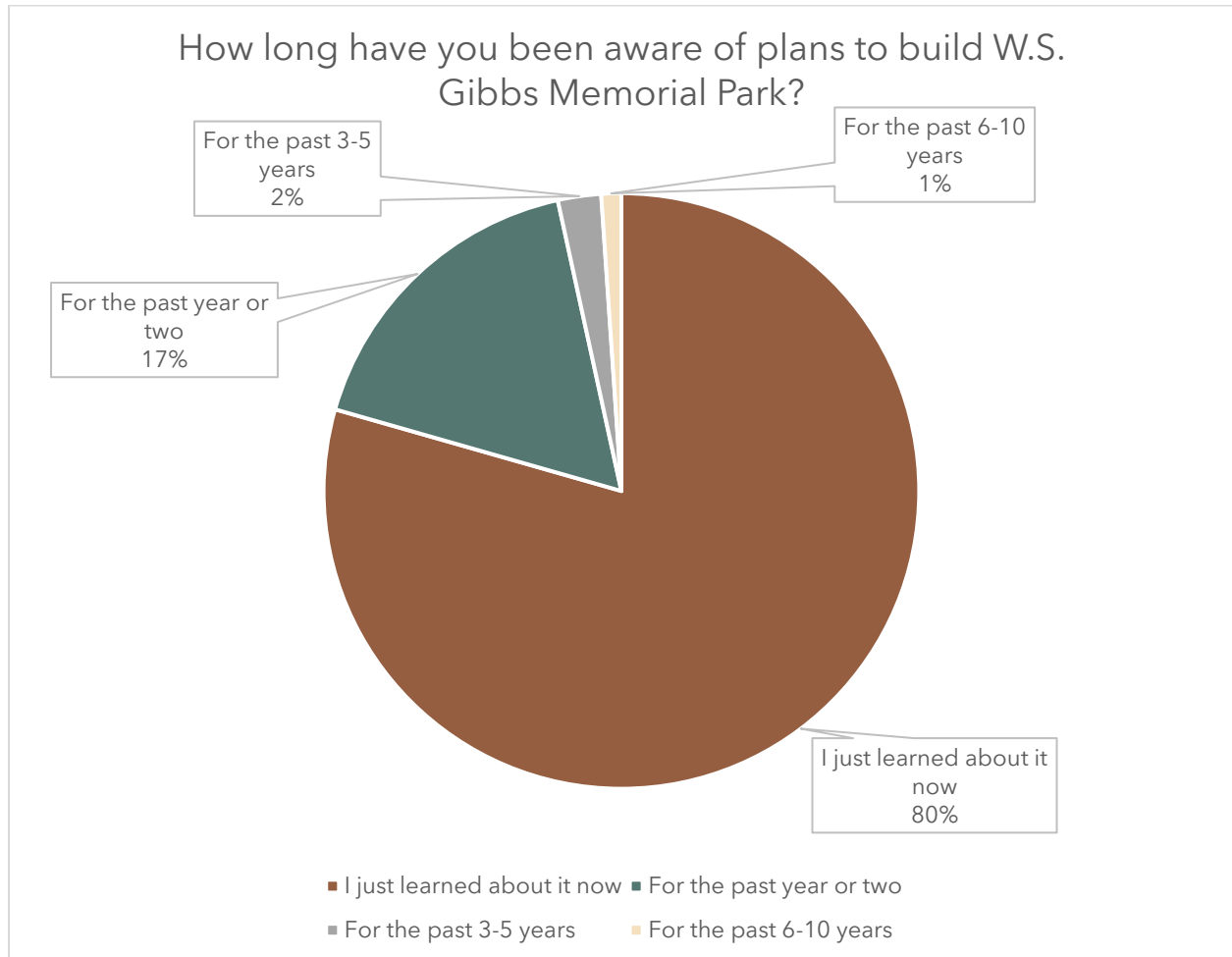


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Very supportive	176	33.46%
Supportive	176	33.46%
Neither supportive or opposed	159	30.23%
Opposed	9	1.71%
Very opposed	6	1.14%
	526	



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Q. How long have you been aware of HCP&R's plans to build W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park?

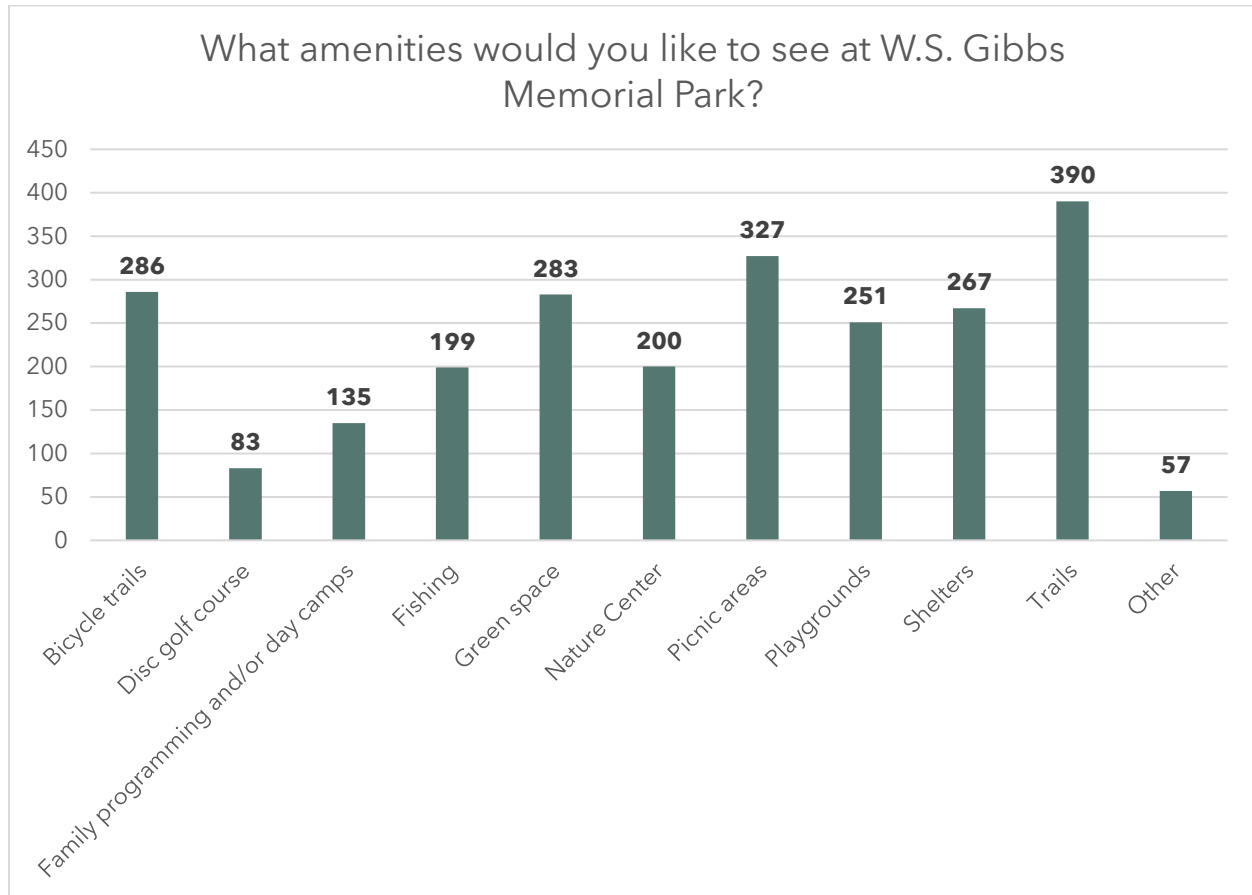


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
I just learned about it now	440	79.42%
For the past year or two	95	17.15%
For the past 3-5 years	13	2.35%
For the past 6-10 years	6	1.08%
	554	



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Q. What amenities would you like to see at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park? (select all that apply)

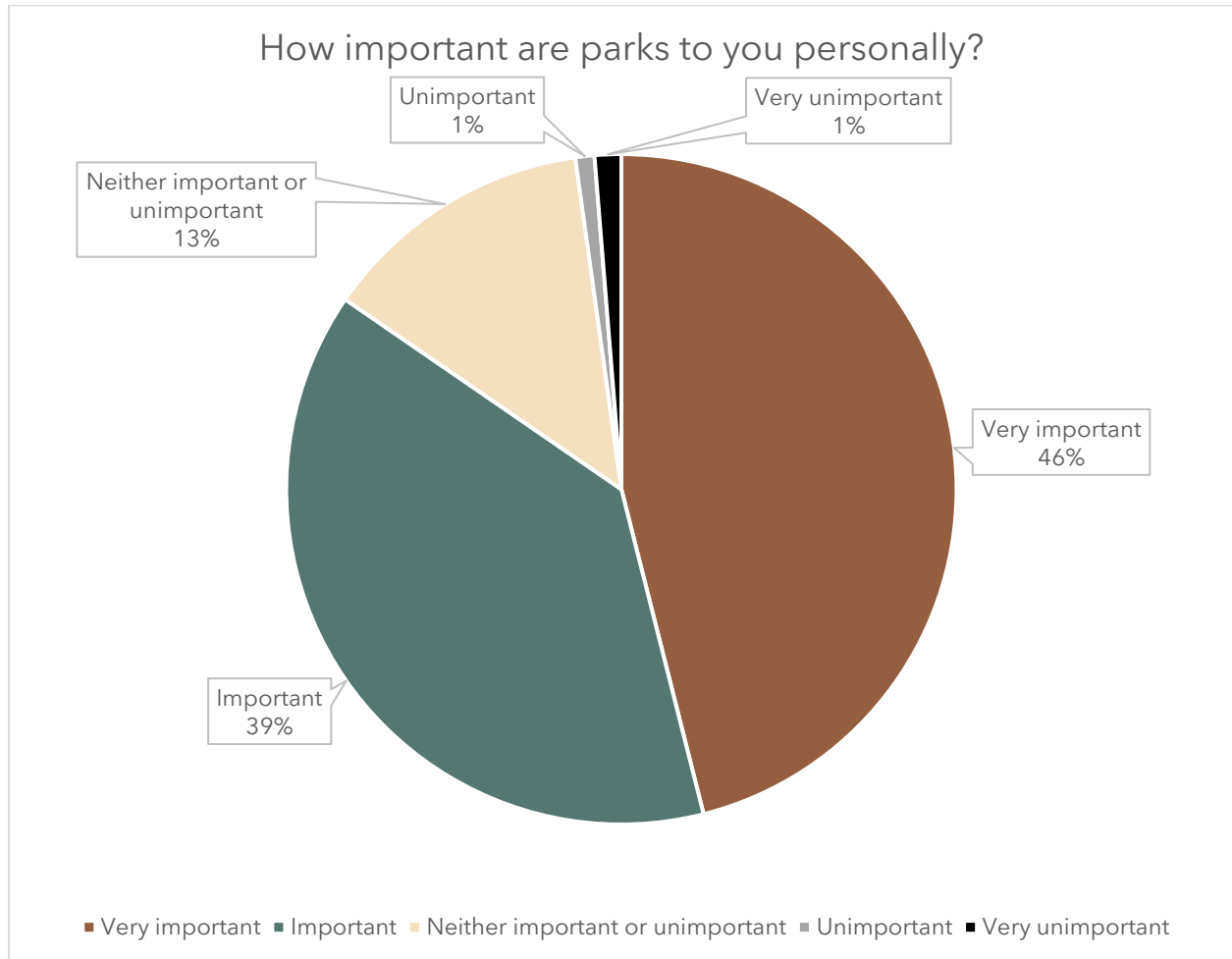


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>
Bicycle trails	286
Disc golf course	83
Family programming and/or day camps	135
Fishing	199
Green space	283
Nature Center	200
Picnic areas	327
Playgrounds	251
Shelters	267
Trails	390
Other	57



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Q. How important are parks to you personally?

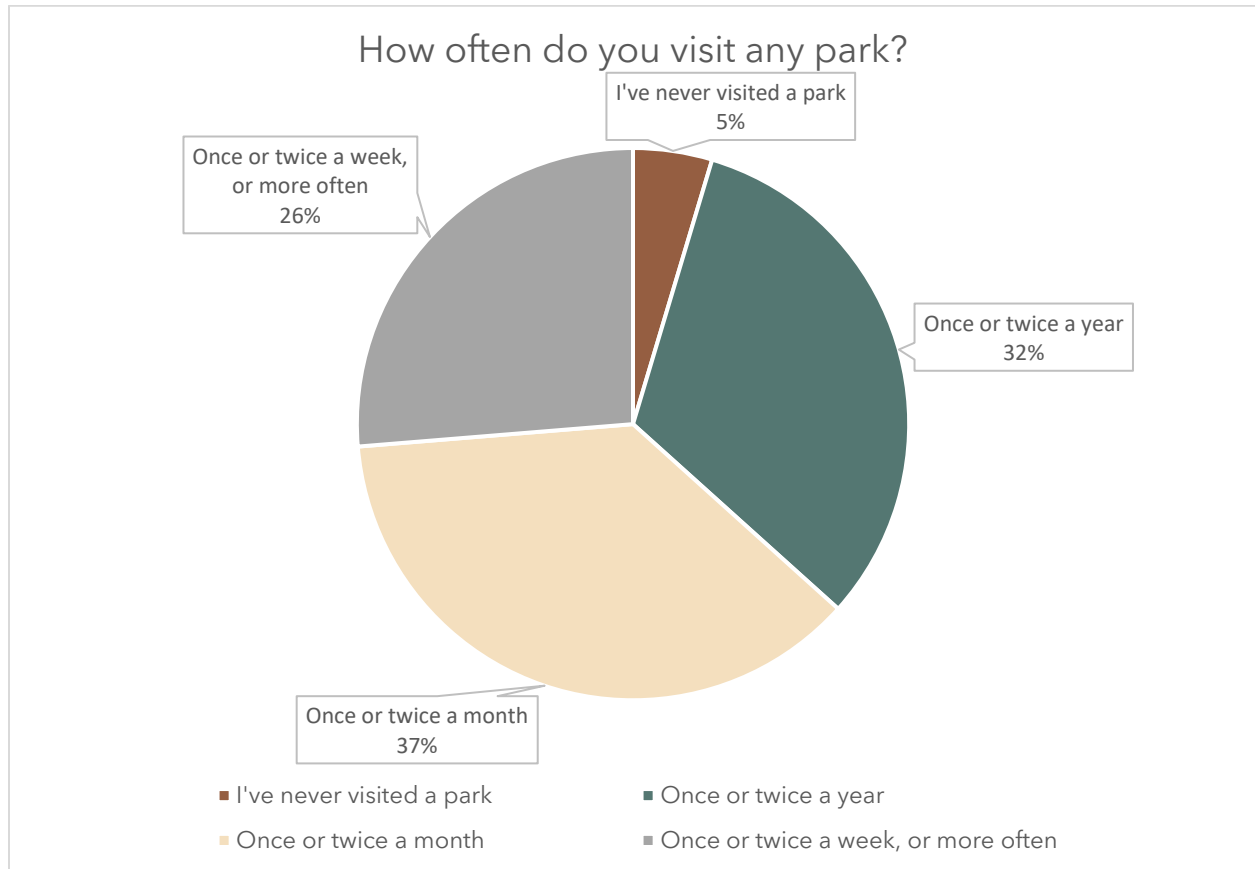


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Very important	251	46.06%
Important	210	38.53%
Neither important or unimportant	72	13.21%
Unimportant	5	0.92%
Very unimportant	7	1.28%
	545	



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Q. How often do you visit any park, whether HCP&R operates it or not?

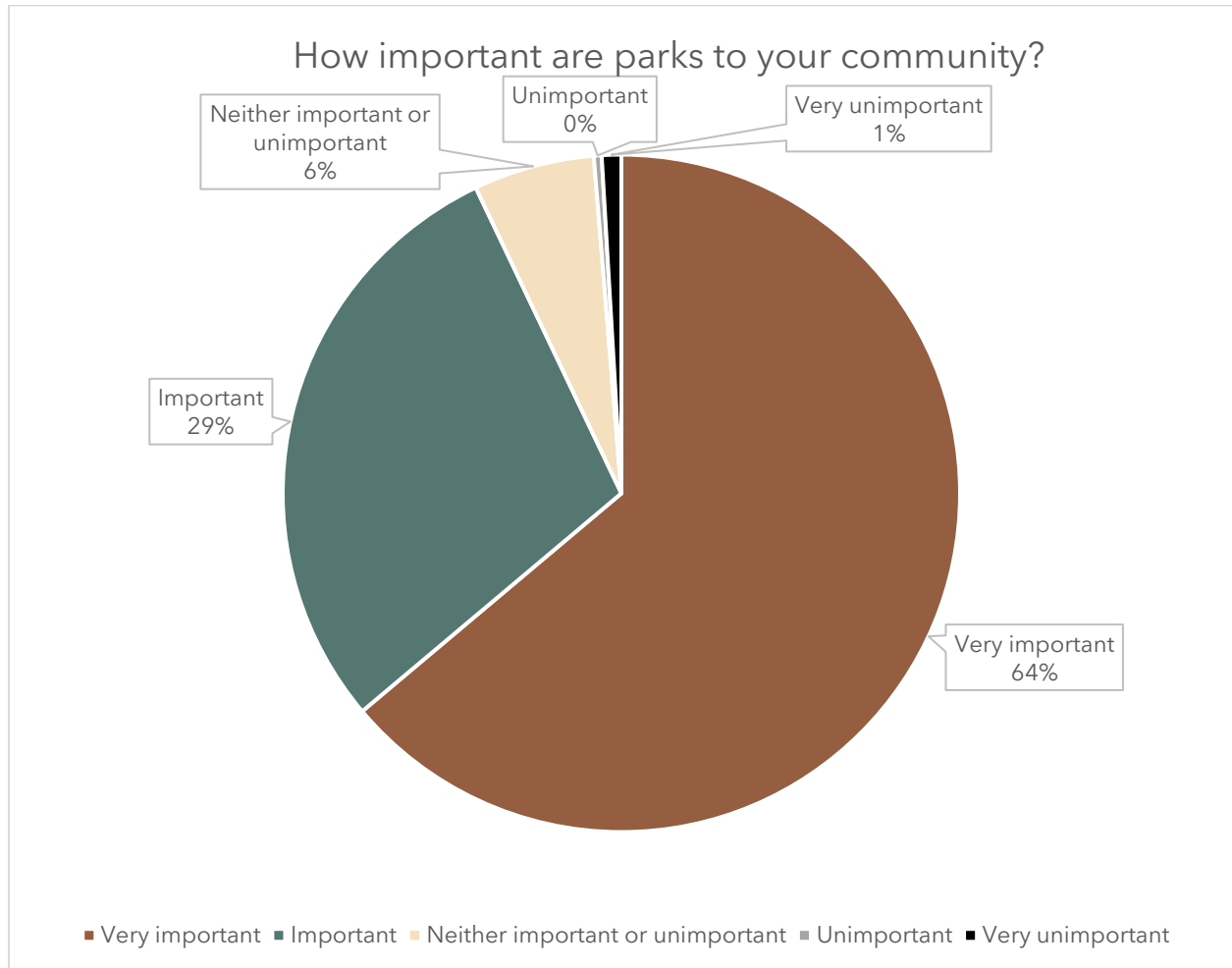


Response	Number	Percentage
I've never visited a park	25	4.63%
Once or twice a year	173	32.04%
Once or twice a month	200	37.04%
Once or twice a week, or more often	142	26.30%
	540	



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Q. In your opinion, how important are parks to your community?

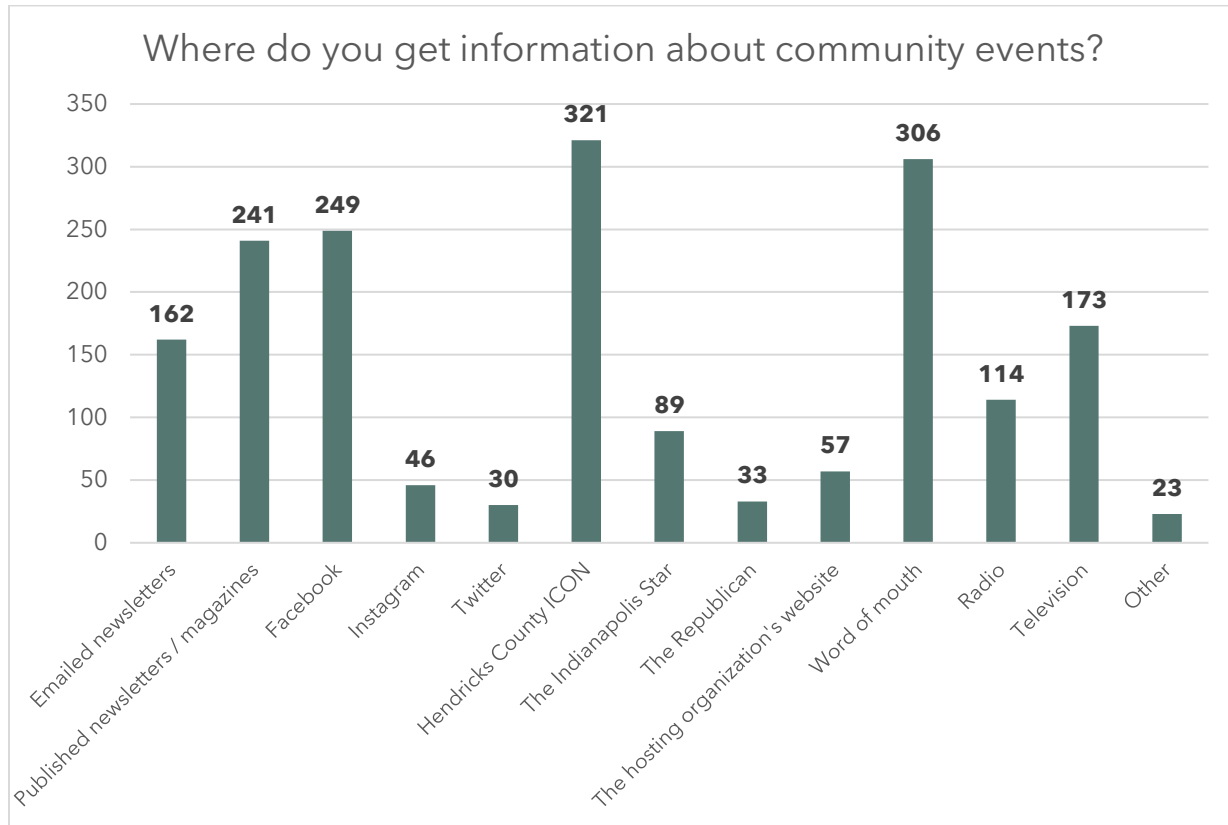


Response	Number	Percentage
Very important	343	63.87%
Important	156	29.05%
Neither important or unimportant	31	5.77%
Unimportant	2	0.37%
Very unimportant	5	0.93%
	537	



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Q. From which sources do you gather information about community events? (select all that apply)



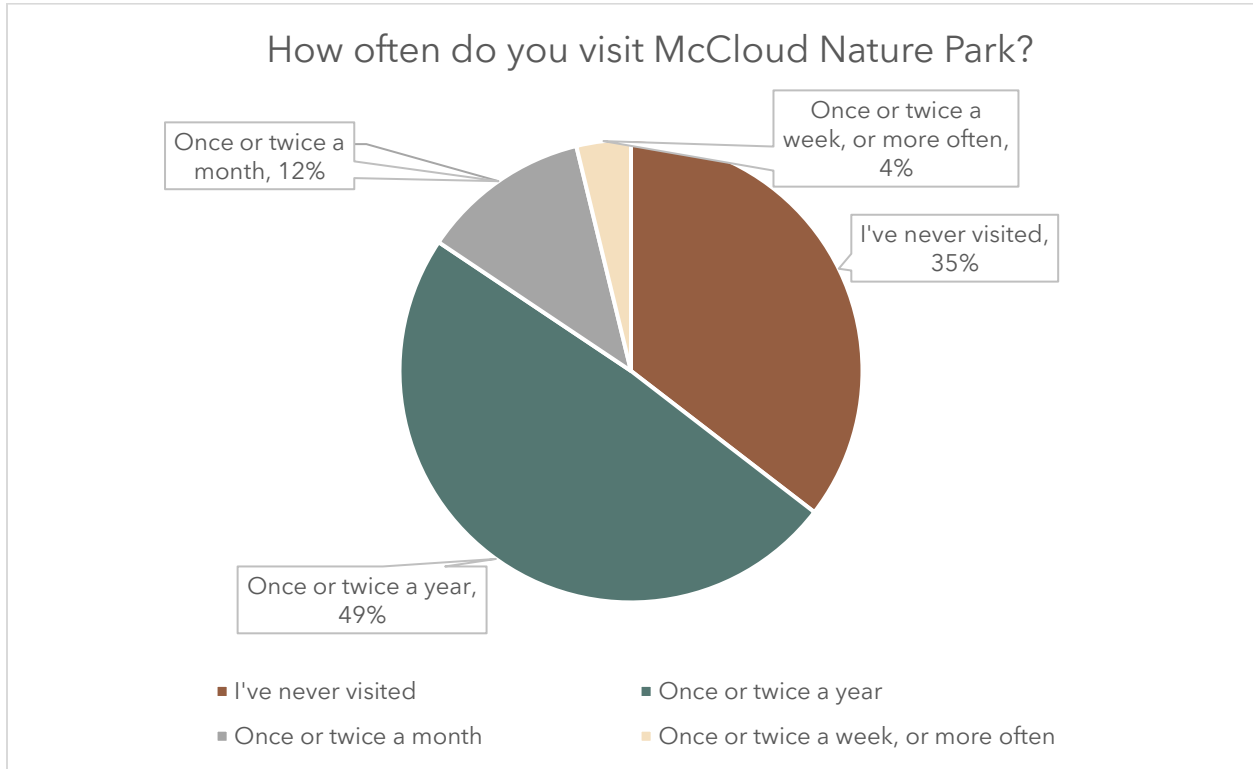
<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emailed newsletters	162
Published newsletters / magazines	241
Facebook	249
Instagram	46
Twitter	30
Hendricks County ICON	321
The Indianapolis Star	89
The Republican	33
The hosting organization's website	57
Word of mouth	306
Radio	114
Television	173
Other	23



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Non-Random Sample

Q: How often do you visit McCloud Nature Park?

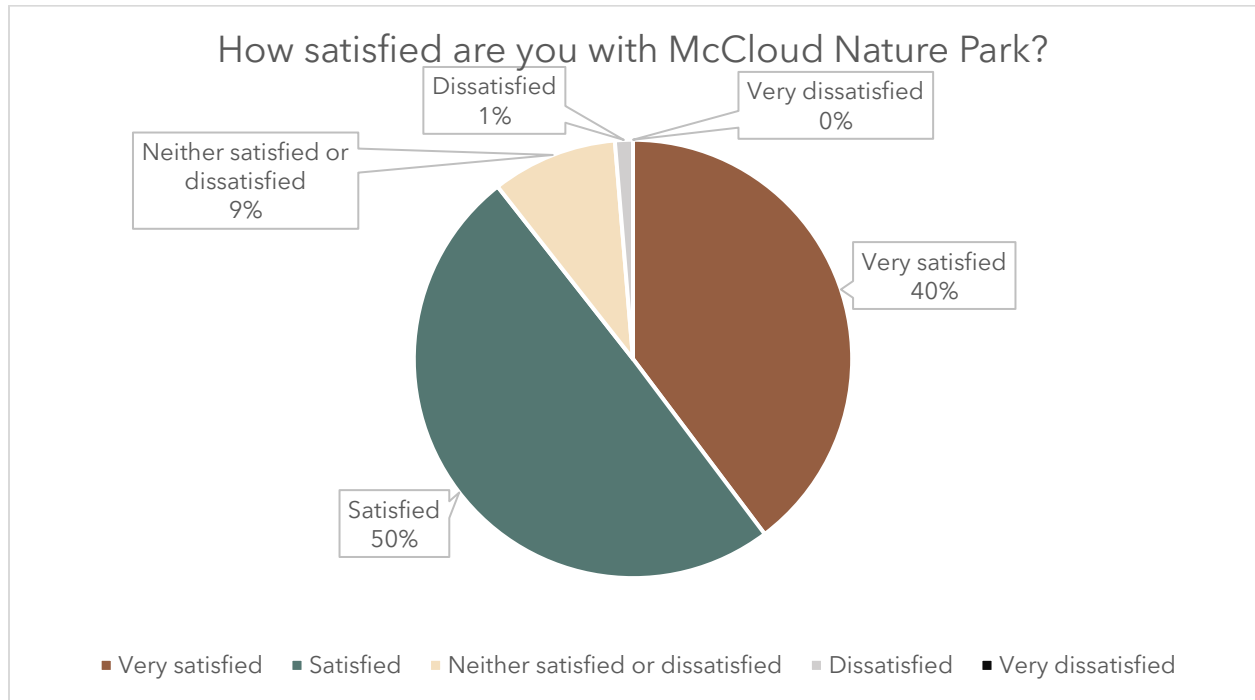


Response	Number	Percentage
I've never visited	84	35.44%
Once or twice a year	116	48.95%
Once or twice a month	28	11.81%
Once or twice a week, or more often	9	3.80%
	237	



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Q: How satisfied are you with McCloud Nature Park?

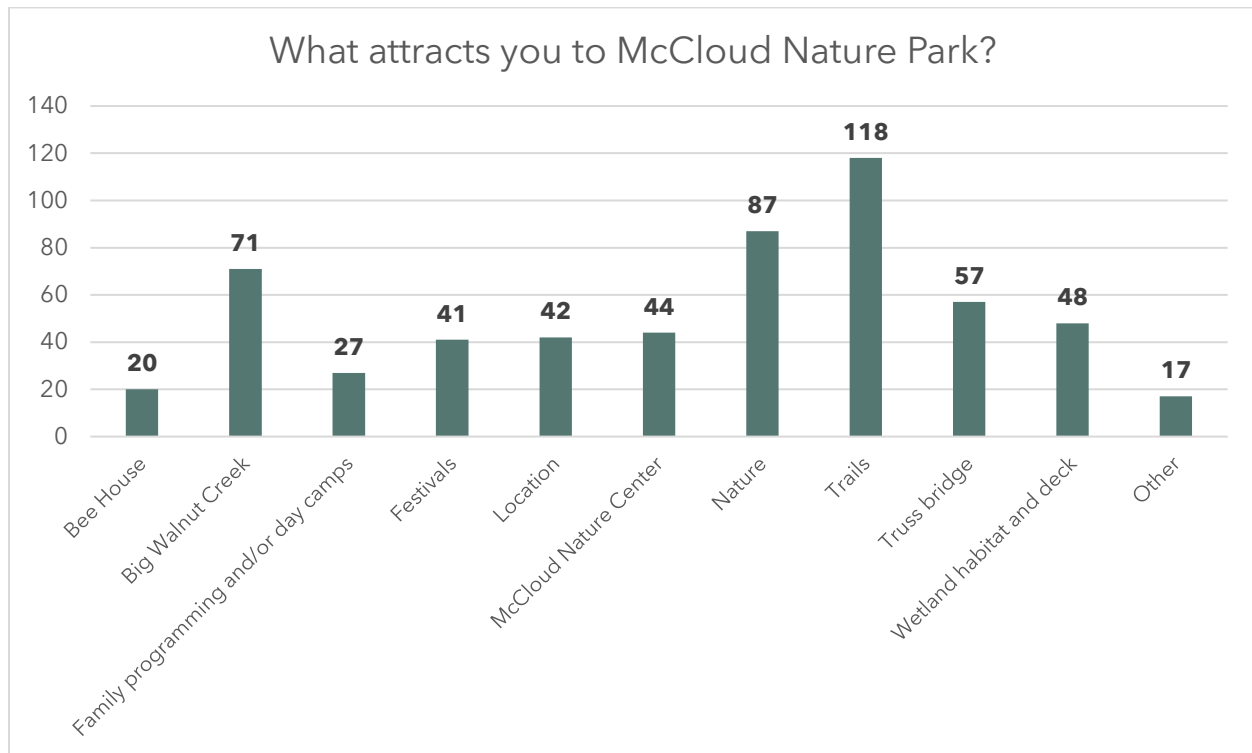


Response	Number	Percentage
Very satisfied	60	39.74%
Satisfied	75	49.67%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	14	9.27%
Dissatisfied	2	1.32%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.00%
	151	



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Q: What attracts you to McCloud Nature Park? (select all that apply)

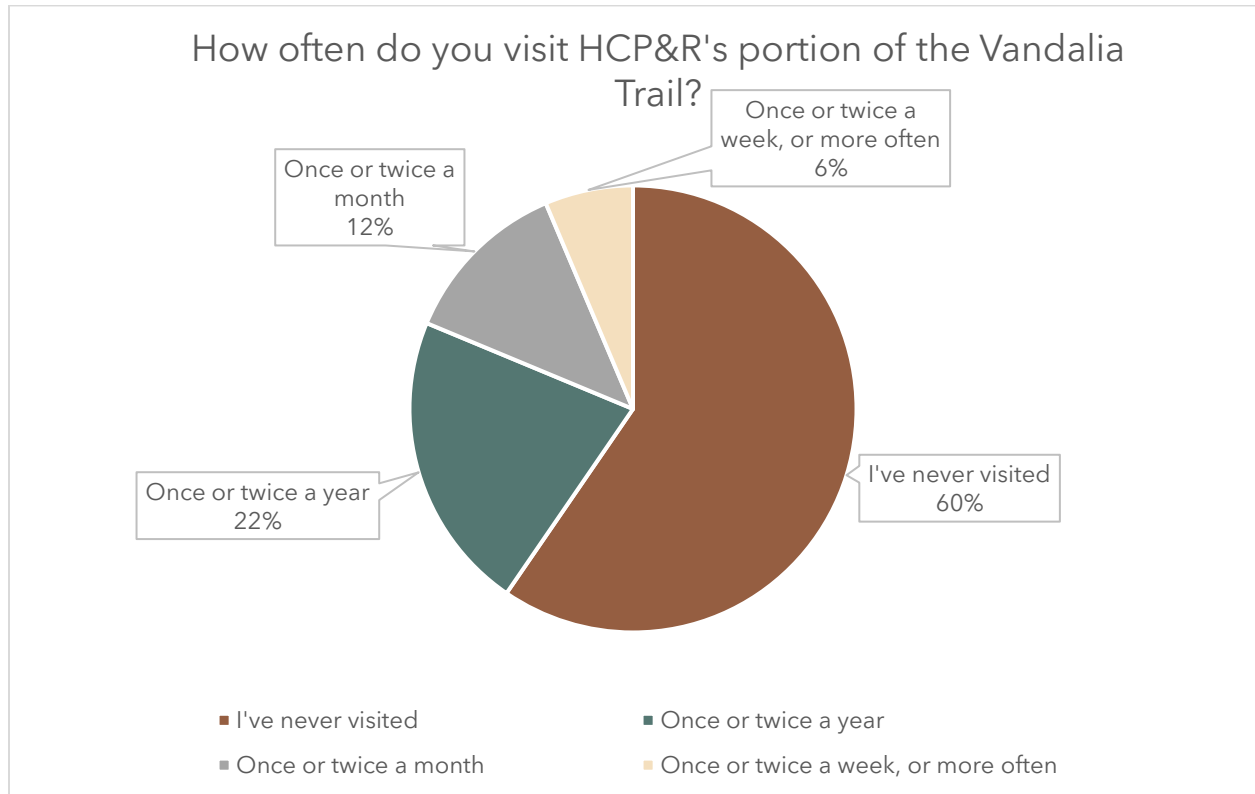


Response	Number
Bee House	20
Big Walnut Creek	71
Family programming and/or day camps	27
Festivals	41
Location	42
McCloud Nature Center	44
Nature	87
Trails	118
Truss bridge	57
Wetland habitat and deck	48
Other	17



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Q: How often do you visit HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail?

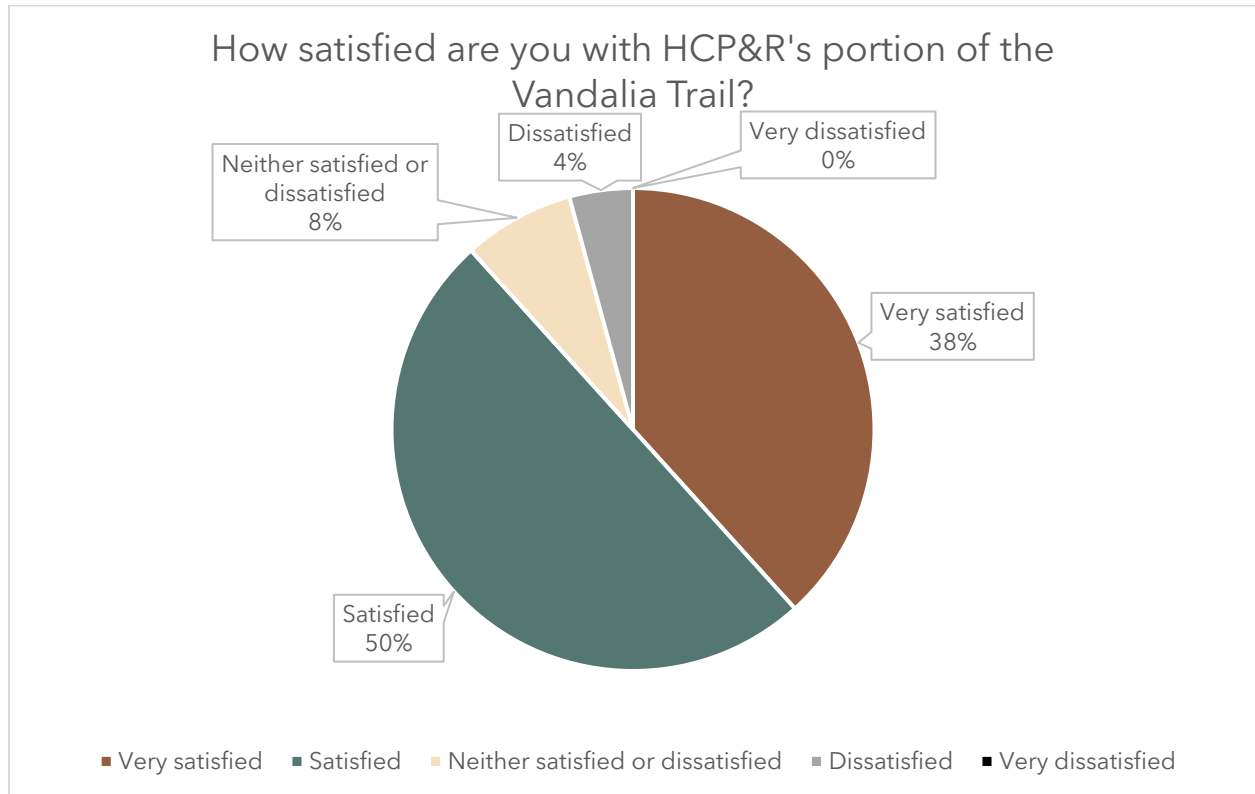


Response	Number	Percentage
I've never visited	140	59.57%
Once or twice a year	51	21.70%
Once or twice a month	29	12.34%
Once or twice a week, or more often	15	6.38%
	235	



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Q: How satisfied are you with HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail?

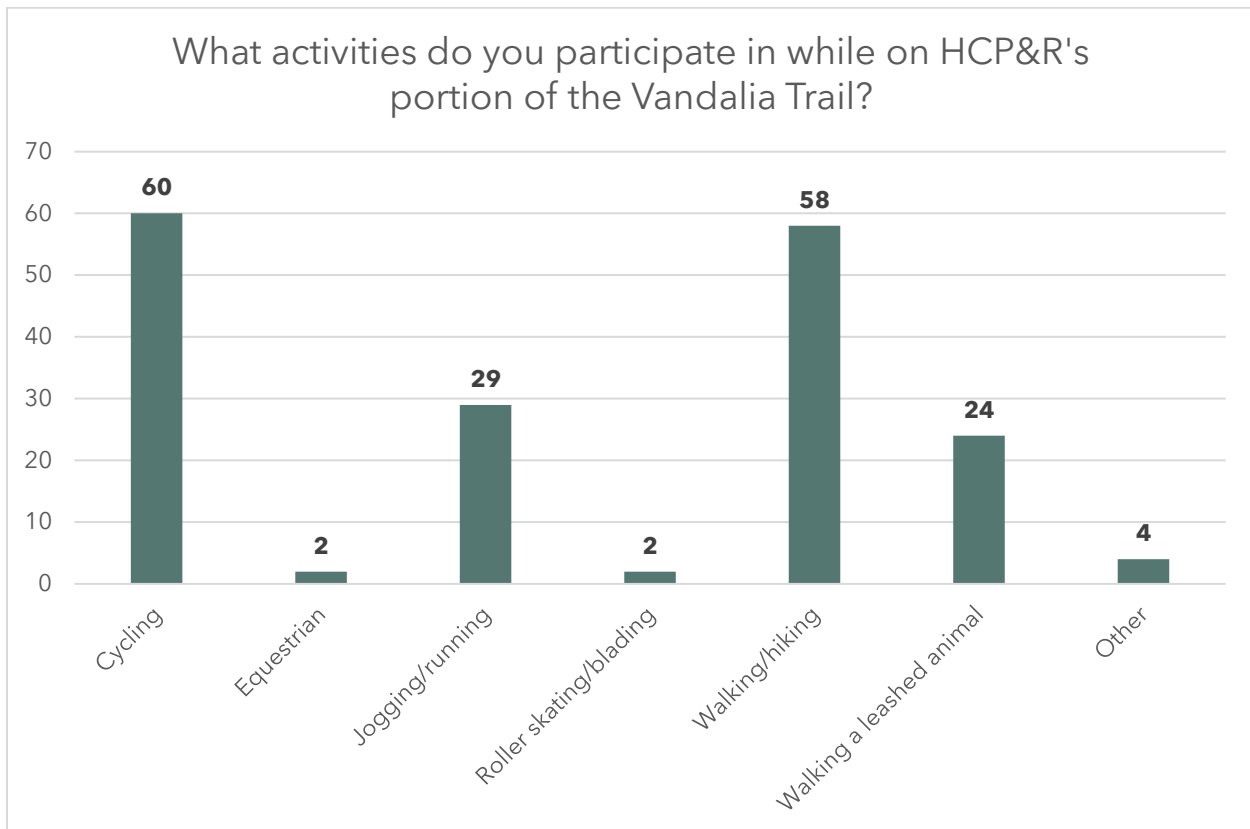


Response	Number	Percentage
Very satisfied	36	38.30%
Satisfied	47	50.00%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	7	7.45%
Dissatisfied	4	4.26%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.00%
	94	



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Q: What activities do you participate in while on HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail? (select all that apply)

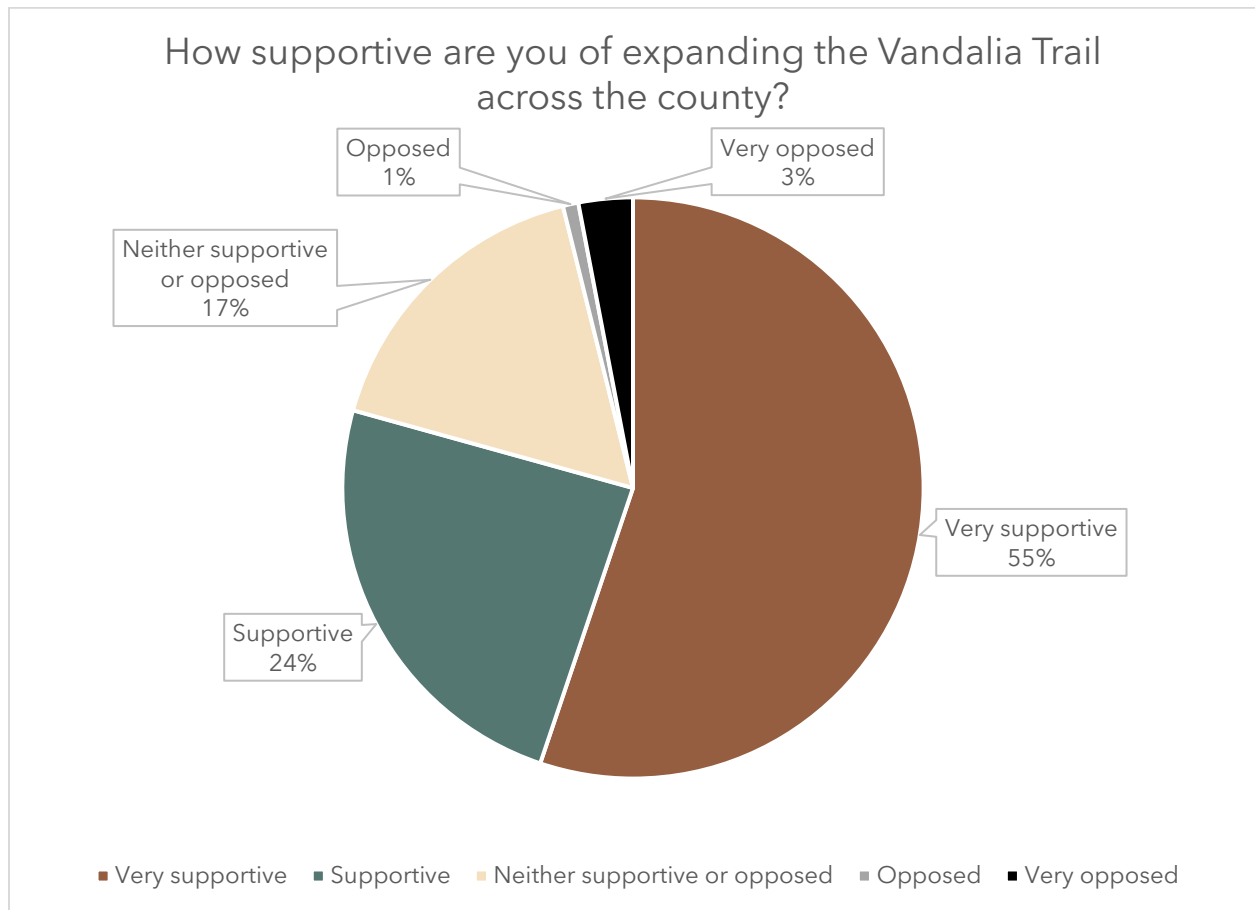


Response	Number
Cycling	60
Equestrian	2
Jogging/running	29
Roller skating/blading	2
Walking/hiking	58
Walking a leashed animal	24
Other	4



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Q: How supportive are you of the plan to expand the Vandalia Trail east from Amo through Clayton and Cartersburg into Plainfield?

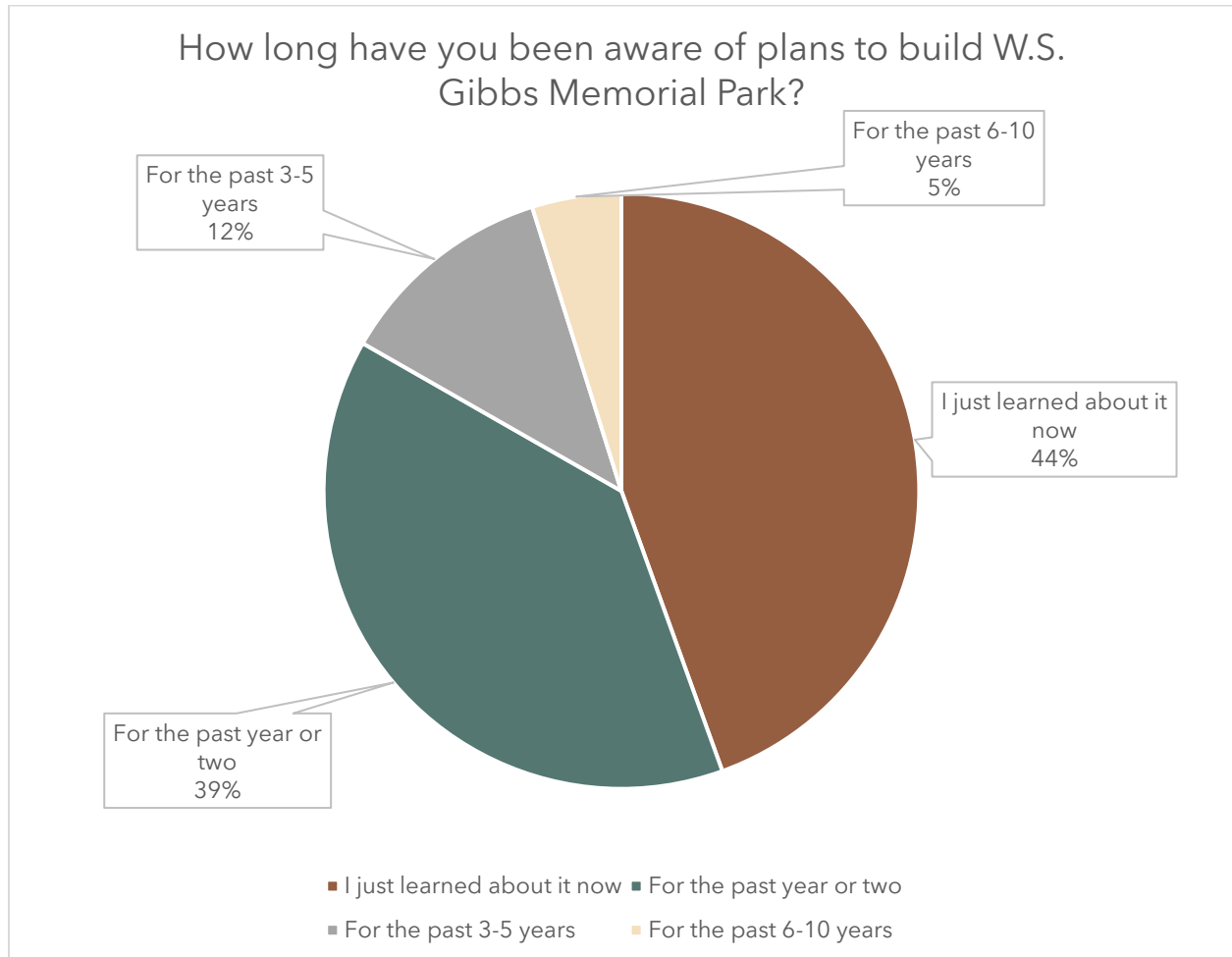


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Very supportive	128	55.17%
Supportive	56	24.14%
Neither supportive or opposed	39	16.81%
Opposed	2	0.86%
Very opposed	7	3.02%
	232	



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Q: How long have you been aware of HCP&R's plans to build W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park?

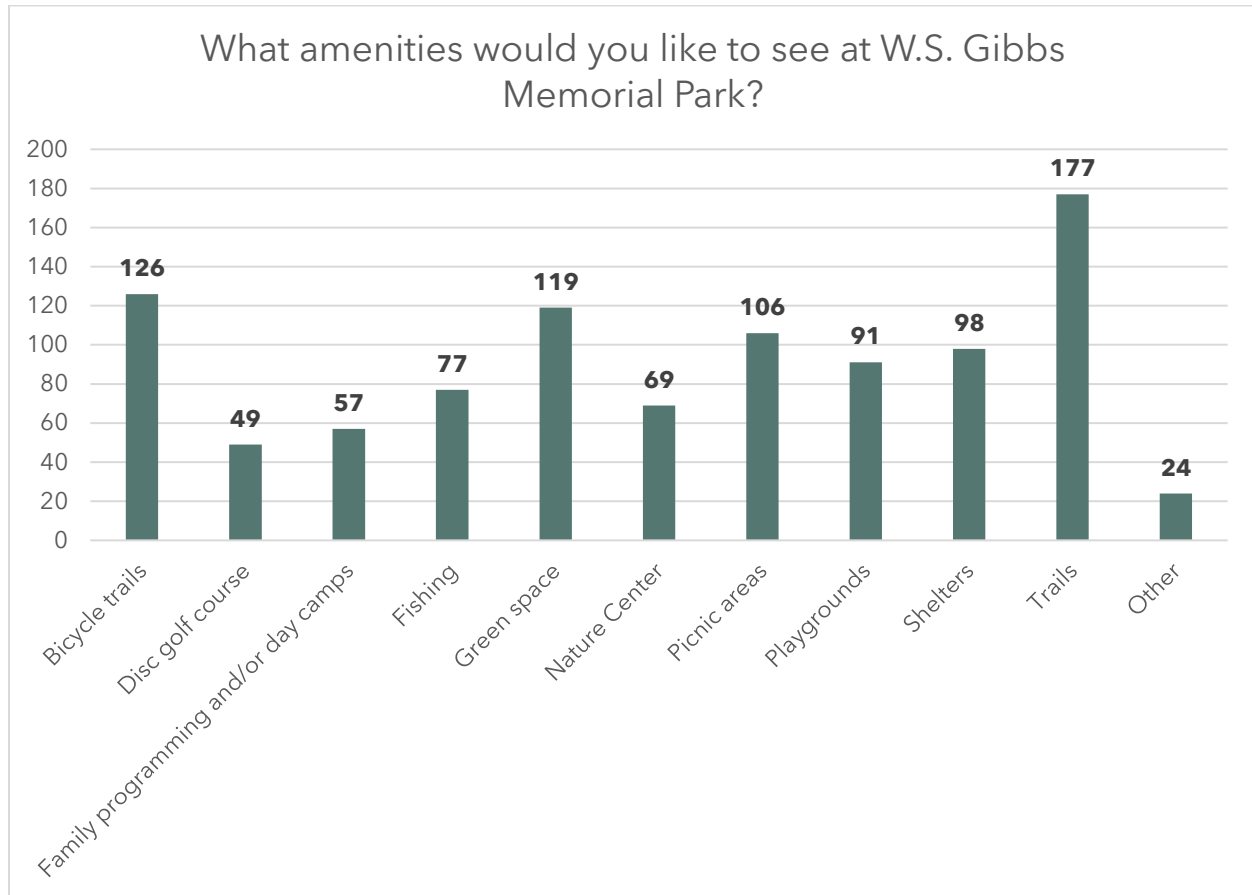


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
I just learned about it now	101	44.49%
For the past year or two	88	38.77%
For the past 3-5 years	27	11.89%
For the past 6-10 years	11	4.85%
	227	



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Q: What amenities would you like to see at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park? (select all that apply)

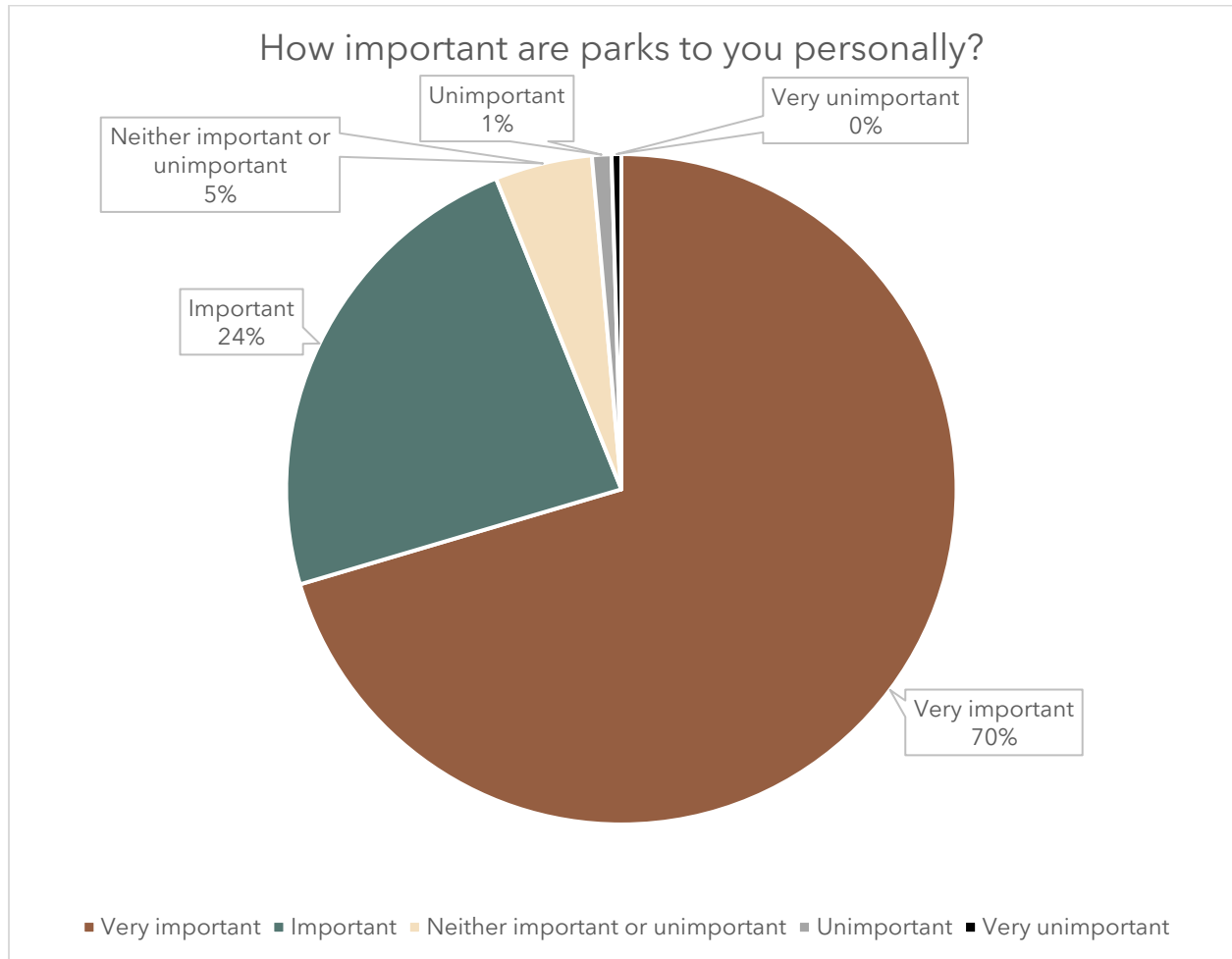


Response	Number
Bicycle trails	126
Disc golf course	49
Family programming and/or day camps	57
Fishing	77
Green space	119
Nature Center	69
Picnic areas	106
Playgrounds	91
Shelters	98
Trails	177
Other	24



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Q: How important are parks to you personally?

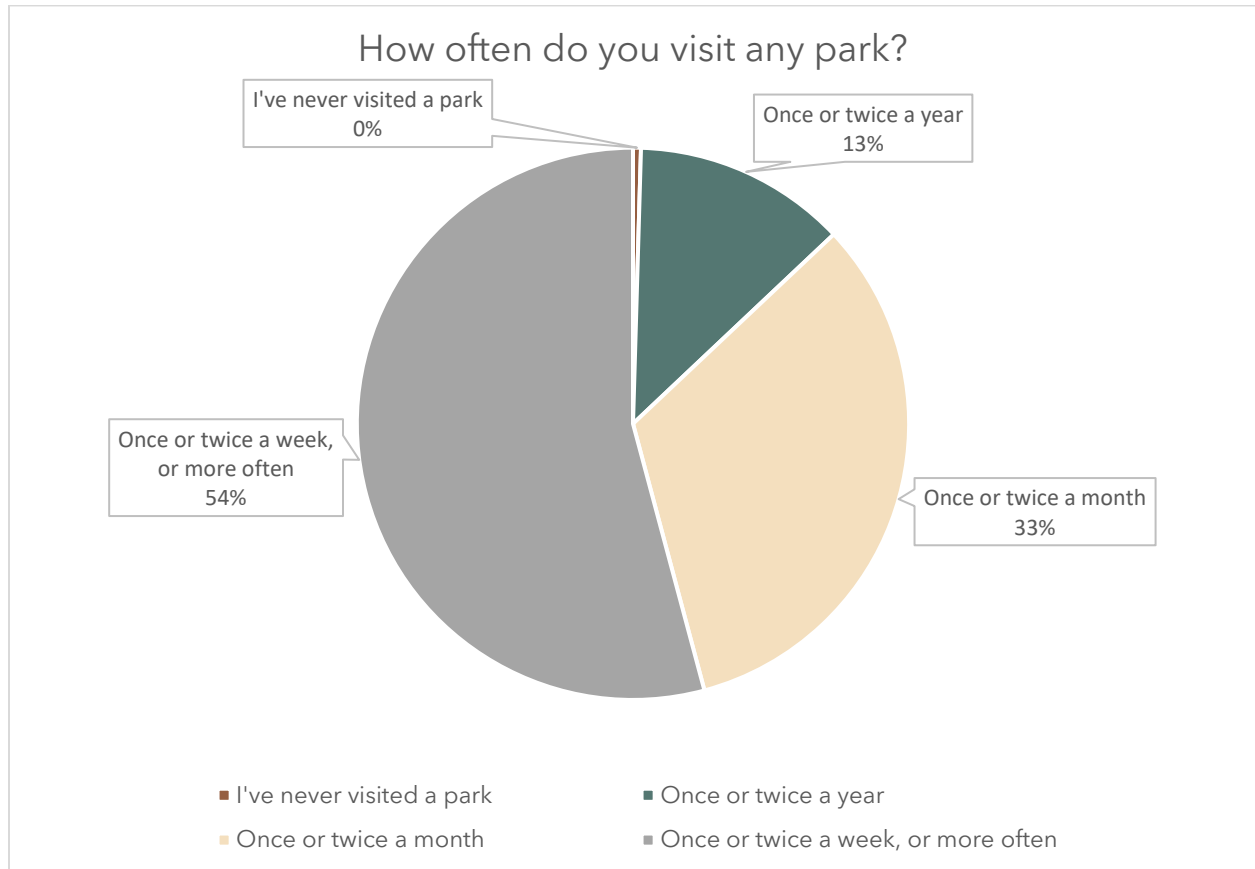


<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Very important	150	70.42%
Important	50	23.47%
Neither important or unimportant	10	4.69%
Unimportant	2	0.94%
Very unimportant	1	0.47%
	213	



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Q: How often do you visit any park, whether HCP&R operates it or not?

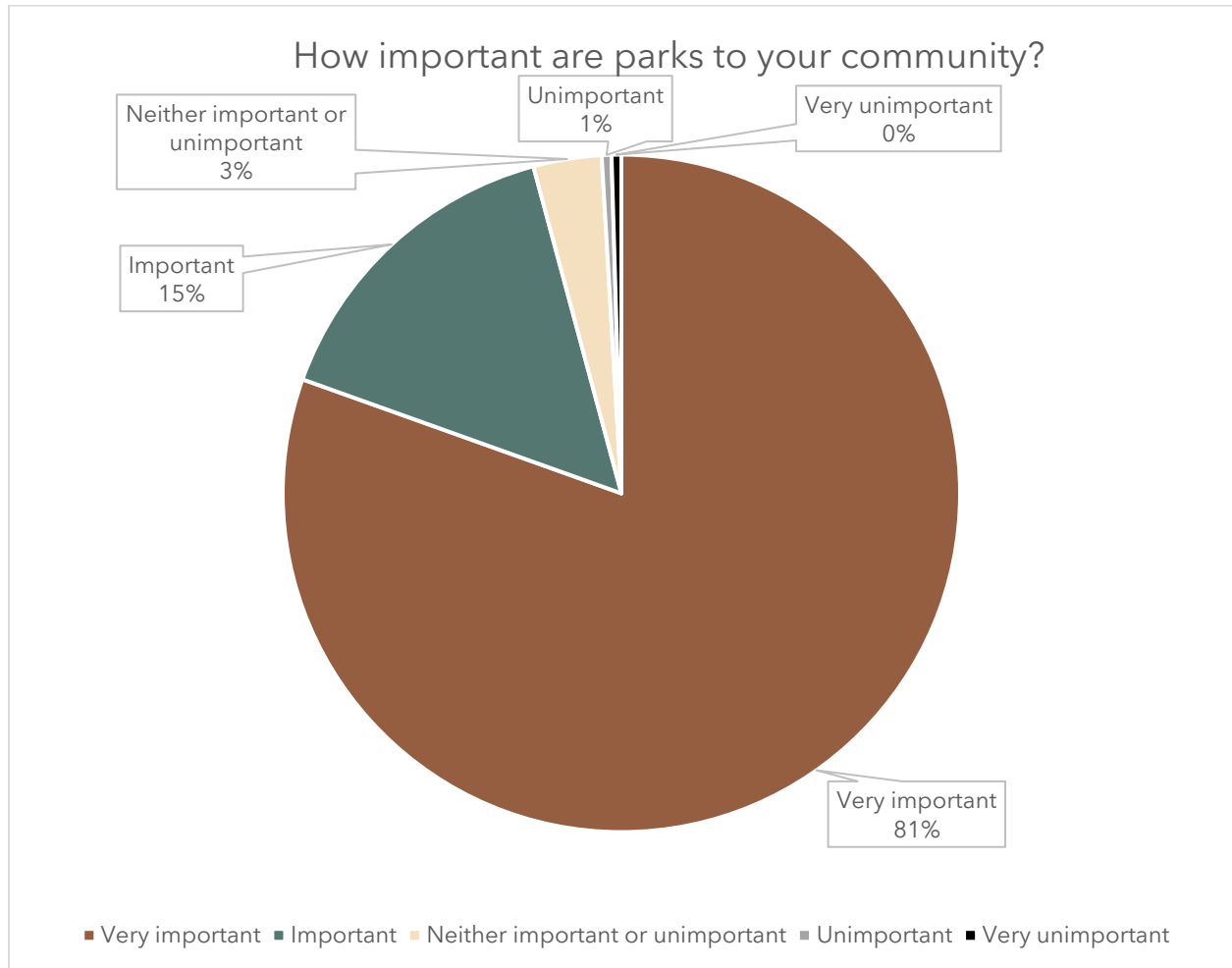


Response	Number	Percentage
I've never visited a park	1	0.46%
Once or twice a year	27	12.50%
Once or twice a month	71	32.87%
Once or twice a week, or more often	117	54.17%
	216	



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Q: In your opinion, how important are parks to your community?

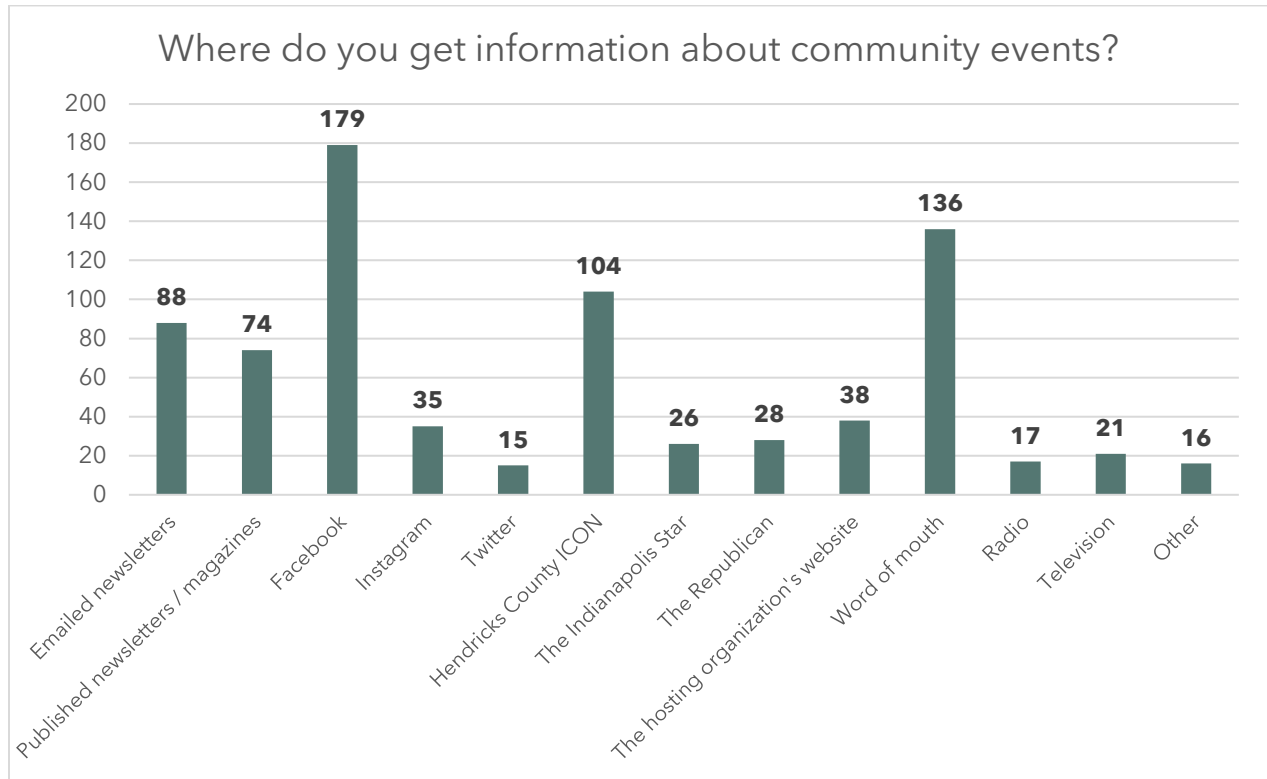


Response	Number	Percentage
Very important	173	80.47%
Important	33	15.35%
Neither important or unimportant	7	3.26%
Unimportant	1	0.47%
Very unimportant	1	0.47%
	215	



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Q: From which sources do you gather information about community events? (select all that apply)



<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>
Emailed newsletters	88
Published newsletters / magazines	74
Facebook	179
Instagram	35
Twitter	15
<i>Hendricks County ICON</i>	104
<i>The Indianapolis Star</i>	26
<i>The Republican</i>	28
The hosting organization's website	38
Word of mouth	136
Radio	17
Television	21
Other	16



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Survey Data Analysis

Invalid Responses

As results from paper surveys were being recorded, it became readily apparent that two questions resulted in invalid responses – responses that did not measure what the questions were attempting to measure. Both questions asked respondents to rank items in importance on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most important item and 1 being the least important item.

One of the questions asked respondents to rank the importance of various amenities in nature parks, and the other question asked respondents to rank the importance of various items that HCP&R spends money on.

Despite what seemed to HCP&R to be clear instructions on how to rank responses, many respondents answered the questions using check marks to indicate what was important to them, ranked items in reverse order (using 1 as the most important and 10 as the least important), or gave several responses the same ranking.

HCP&R received a few comments from respondents (see Appendix A) expressing concerns about the questions and how they might be answered incorrectly. The reverse ranking problem then became obvious when, for example, a respondent would express through comments and other survey questions that they are very interested in bicycling, but then gave bike trails a “1” in the rankings.

Several other respondents ranked items in reverse, caught their error, and corrected their responses on the survey, indicating that the instructions had initially tripped them up.

While some responses were clearly ranked in reverse order, there was no reliable way to determine how many were done that way. This, combined with the two other ways in which responses were incorrectly ranked or indicated, rendered both questions invalid and the results unusable.

A note was made in Appendix B to not use this type of ranking system in questions on future Comprehensive Master Plan surveys.

Property Visitation

The results of the random sample reveal that McCloud Nature Park and the Vandalia Trail are not used by a majority of the Hendricks County population. Nearly 81% of the population has never been on the Vandalia Trail, and 61% has never been to McCloud Nature Park.

In the non-random sample – generally skewed toward supporters, followers of HCP&R on social media, and park guests – 60% of respondents have never been on the Vandalia Trail and 35% have never visited McCloud Nature Park.

This could be a result of location – McCloud is in the far northwest corner of the county, while the Vandalia Trail is on the far western edge – with both properties being located in the most sparsely populated half of the county. HCP&R staff often hear comments (and received some in a few survey responses; see Appendix A) from the



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public that McCloud Nature Park is a long way away from their home and that town parks or Indianapolis parks are closer and more convenient to visit.

HCP&R staff also routinely hear comments from the public that people have never heard of McCloud Nature Park or the Vandalia Trail. This is one of many indicators that HCP&R is not reaching a significant portion of the Hendricks County population through their means of communication.

Communications / Marketing

Nearly 80% of the random sample respondents were not aware of the plans to construct W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park in Avon until they read about it in the survey. Plans have been publicized for the past 10 years, with much more frequent communications about the new park being sent to local media within the last two years. About 17% of respondents have learned about the new park in the past year or two, which indicates some success in recent communication efforts, but there is a lot of room to improve.

The responses from the non-random sample showed a similar, but less extreme, pattern: 44% learned about the park construction in the survey, while 39% learned of it within the past year or two.

Additionally, many comments on surveys made it clear that a lot of Hendricks County residents believe that HCP&R operates all parks in the county. While it is an understandable conclusion for residents to reach, HCP&R has been trying to educate the public on this topic for years – unsuccessfully, obviously.

Random sample survey respondents identified the *Hendricks County ICON* as the most popular source of their information; however, the weekly *ICON* only serves the eastern half of Hendricks County and publishes more feature stories than timely news items. They list their direct-mail circulation on their website as 38,077 households, but there are over 58,000 households in Hendricks County. HCP&R routinely includes the *ICON* in press releases, and they have done feature stories on various HCP&R staff members, but it's not an ideal means of advertising upcoming programs or pop-up events.

Hendricks County's oldest and only newspaper, *The Republican*, is a weekly publication and is very supportive of HCP&R, frequently covering festivals and special events, and featuring HCP&R press releases on the front page above the fold. Unfortunately, very few survey respondents indicate that they use *The Republican* as a source of information.

Facebook, published newsletters and magazines (like *The Explorer*), and emailed newsletters all ranked among the top of local news sources, and HCP&R already utilizes these methods in earnest.

Among the non-random sample, the most popular sources of information were the same but in a slightly different order. Facebook ruled supreme, followed by word of mouth, and the *ICON*. Emailed newsletters and published newsletters and magazines ranked fourth and fifth, respectively.

Advertising through television and radio are cost-prohibitive for HCP&R, as are frequent direct mailings to all Hendricks County households.



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One option for reaching more Hendricks County citizens in the future is to utilize W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, which will be located in the heart of the populated portion of Hendricks County and is expected to have significant visitation year-round, as a vehicle with which to advertise for HCP&R's other two properties.

HCP&R is currently working with the Indiana Department of Transportation to add wayfinding signs to McCloud Nature Park and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park to some of the major thoroughfares within Hendricks County, which should help with public awareness of the parks.

McCloud Nature Park Attractions

The top five attractions at McCloud Nature Park, according to the random sample survey results, are: trails, nature, Big Walnut Creek, the truss bridge, and the McCloud Nature Center (in that order). The wetland habitat and observation deck were a close sixth.

The results from the non-random sample were very similar: trails, nature, Big Walnut Creek, the truss bridge, and the wetland habitat and observation deck (in that order).

Interestingly, family programming and/or day camps ranked lowest on the list of attractions for the random sample (second-lowest among the non-random sample), and festivals ranked third-lowest for both samples. Park guests seem to enjoy the park for what is *located* there, significantly more than what is *happening* there on any given day or weekend.

Vandalia Trail Activities

The top four activities that random sample respondents participate in while on the Vandalia Trail are: walking, cycling, jogging, and walking a leashed animal (in that order). Equestrian activities and roller skating/blading were a very distant fifth and sixth, respectively.

Cycling barely beat out walking among the non-random sample, but the rest of the results were the same as in the random sample.

Only a few family programs have ever been held along the Vandalia Trail so, as with guests at McCloud Nature Park, Vandalia Trail users enjoy the trail for what is *located* there, as opposed to what is *happening* there on any given day or weekend.

Desired Amenities at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

The top five requested amenities at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park by the random sample were (in order): trails, picnic areas, bicycle trails, green space, and shelters.

The same amenities were requested by the non-random sample, although in a slightly different order: trails, bicycle trails, green space, picnic areas, and shelters.



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As HCP&R develops the remaining 70 acres of the park property in coming years, bicycle trails – both paved and off-road – should be high on the list of amenities. In 2017, a W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park task force also recommended bicycle trails as an important amenity to be included in the park.

Family programming and/or day camps were the second-least popular request as an amenity at the new park for both samples, further confirming what was learned with the responses to similar questions about McCloud and the Vandalia Trail: park guests are going to HCP&R's properties for what is *located* there, as opposed to what is *happening* there on any given day or weekend.

Property Satisfaction

Of the survey respondents who have visited McCloud Nature Park and the Vandalia Trail, an overwhelming majority of both samples are either satisfied or very satisfied with the properties, indicating that the HCP&R staff is doing a good job of providing park guests with an environment and experience that they enjoy.

Eastward Expansion of the Vandalia Trail

About 97% of random sample survey respondents expressed no opposition to the eastward expansion of the Vandalia Trail from Amo through Clayton and Cartersburg to Plainfield. About 67% of the respondents indicated being supportive or very supportive of the expansion.

The results from the non-random sample were very similar: 96% are not opposed, and about 79% are supportive or very supportive.

While only 3% of random sample respondents and 4% of non-random sample respondents are opposed or very opposed to the expansion, their opposition is passionate, so HCP&R and the Park Board would do well to listen to opponents' concerns and address them constructively before expanding the trail. Based on additional comments that opponents provided through the survey, their concerns appear to be centered around perceived government overreach, privacy, and safety.

Importance of Parks

About 85% of the random sample survey respondents rated parks as being important or very important to them personally, and 93% gave the same responses about parks being important to the community.

Among the non-random sample, 94% find parks to be important or very important to them personally, and 96% said the same thing about the importance of parks in the community.

About 95% of the Hendricks County population visits a park – whether HCP&R operates it or not – at least once a year, according to the random sample results. About 63% of the population visits a park at least once a month.

The non-random sample respondents visit parks even more frequently. Only one respondent out of 216 has never visited a park. The remaining 99.5% visit a park at least once a year. About 87% of the non-random sample visits a park at least once a month.



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While HCP&R is well aware that parks benefit the economy, quality of life, and the mental and physical health of their guests, these results and related comments indicate that Hendricks County residents are aware of the benefits, too, and take advantage of the local parks to reap those benefits.

Public Input Meeting

A meeting was held on Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Hendricks County Government Center to allow for public input on the Comprehensive Master Plan and where local citizens would like HCP&R to focus their time, efforts, and money over the next five years.

While an evening and/or weekend meeting date and time would have been preferred, a late-year spike in COVID-19 across the state limited public gathering sizes. Additionally, finding an available venue for a potentially large gathering that would allow for proper social distancing proved exceedingly difficult. HCP&R considered not holding a public meeting at all out of concern for public health and welfare, but ultimately decided to compromise and hold a daytime meeting during the week that would likely keep the gathering size manageable.

The meeting was advertised via HCP&R's website and Facebook page, as well as through press releases sent to local media on Nov. 30, 2020 (see Appendix C).

Superintendent Ryan Lemley, assistant superintendent Eric Ivie, and administrative assistant Robin Wambach represented the HCP&R staff, while Mike Hayden and Gary Emsweller from the Hendricks County Park Board attended, too. Lindsay M. and Bert B. attended from the public.

Ivie gave a 45-minute-long overview of HCP&R and the CMP, including the Park Board's list of priorities and actions, and then he and Lemley responded to questions from the members of the public.

Q: Did the survey include all sections of the Vandalia Trail, including Plainfield's section?

A: No. The survey specifically asked about visitation to, satisfaction of, and activities enjoyed on HCP&R's section of the Vandalia Trail.

Q: Is there any signage along the Vandalia Trail that advertises businesses like restaurants and coffee shops in Amo or Coatesville?

A: No, there is not. Both trailheads are located in the center of their respective towns, making most businesses visible to trail users when they arrive. However, there is no signage along the trail advertising that XYZ Business is located in the town a mile ahead. That is a suggestion that HCP&R will certainly consider.

Q: What types of programs will be offered at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park?

A: HCP&R will leave the exact nature of the programs offered at the new park up to their naturalists, but HCP&R intends to take a more "recreational" slant toward programming than is traditionally offered at McCloud Nature Park. McCloud's programming is generally educational with a little recreation sprinkled in, and with McCloud being the secluded park that it is, that type of programming is perfect there. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, though,



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is more geographically-centered within the county and is definitely in the middle of the most populated half of the county, and HCP&R suspects that park guests there will desire more recreation. Assistant Park Naturalist Joe Lembo has extensive professional experience with recreational programming, so HCP&R leadership will likely tap into his creativity in that area for ideas on what programs to offer.

Q: Do local clubs or groups utilize the parks?

A: Yes. The Indiana Astronomical Society holds astronomy programs at McCloud Nature Park, the Hendricks County Disc Golf Club has been instrumental in the design of the disc golf course at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park and has discussed using the park as their headquarters, scout organizations often utilize McCloud Nature Park, a local bluebird society has done work at McCloud, and McCloud is often used by photographers as a backdrop for family photography or the subject of nature photography. Avon High School has sent students to W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park during the Avon Junior Day of Caring, and the Tri-West High School Service Club spends the day at McCloud twice a year, doing community service work there. HCP&R welcomes groups and clubs that would like to utilize the parks.

Q: Have any murals been painted in the parks anywhere?

A: No. HCP&R generally prefers its buildings and structures to blend in with nature, but the department is not necessarily opposed to murals. It has just never come up. There are murals along the B&O Trail in the tunnel under Ronald Reagan Parkway that were done by local artists, but HCP&R doesn't operate the B&O Trail.

Q: How does one become a volunteer with HCP&R?

A: HCP&R's volunteers are organized by Park Naturalist Sarah Wolf, and she can be reached by email at volunteer@hcparks.net or by phone at (765) 676-5437.

Q: Are there any plans to develop any unused or open areas of parks?

A: The Park Board would like to investigate further development of the north side of McCloud Nature Park over the next five years, perhaps adding some shelters or something along those lines. And there is another 70 acres at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park that will be developed in future phases. HCP&R is mindful of park guests' desire for green space, so nothing will be overdeveloped.

The Public Input Meeting ended at approximately 10:30 a.m.



Needs Analysis

While collecting qualitative information from Hendricks County citizens, stakeholders, and employees as described in previous pages, HCP&R conducted a benchmark comparison between itself and five other parks departments to obtain some quantitative information. The qualitative and quantitative information was then combined and used to complete a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the department.

Benchmark Comparison

The purpose of benchmarking is to assist the planning team in setting standards for HCP&R's parks and recreation facilities and to measure where HCP&R stands in comparison to other chosen agencies regarding park acreage, services, budgets, staffing, cost recovery, and other attributes. This information provides an indication of how HCP&R delivers services to residents compared to the other agencies.

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.

The following benchmark agencies were selected:

- Zionsville (Indiana) Parks & Recreation
- Hamilton County (Indiana) Parks & Recreation
- St. Joseph County (Indiana) Parks & Recreation
- Whitman County (Washington) Parks & Recreation
- Fairfield (Ohio) Parks & Recreation

The benchmark communities were chosen because of their similar qualities to HCP&R. Zionsville and Hamilton County are both geographically close to Hendricks County, Zionsville manages nature parks, and Hendricks County is often compared to Hamilton County - primarily because they are both among the fastest-growing counties in Indiana. St. Joseph County is comparable in population and land area to Hendricks County.

Whitman County (WA) is a department that operates parks that are very similar in nature to HCP&R's parks in unincorporated areas of a largely agricultural area of the state. Fairfield (OH) is a city department that operates nature parks in addition to traditional city parks. Its proximity to Cincinnati mimics Hendricks County's proximity to Indianapolis.



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Benchmark: Agency Resources

Item	Zionsville, IN	Hamilton County, IN	St. Joseph County, IN	Whitman County, WA	Fairfield, OH	Average	Median	Hendricks County, IN
Population (est. 2019)	28,357	338,011	266,709	50,104	42,558	145,148	183,184	170,311
Population Growth (2010-19)	16.3%	23.1%	-0.1%	11.9%	0.1%	17.1%	11.5%	17.1%
Total Land Area (sq. miles)	71	398	457.85	2,159	20.94	621.36	1,140	407
Total Land Area per 1,000 people (sq. mi.)	2.5	1.18	1.71	43.09	0.49	9.79	21.79	2.39
Number of Parks	19	13	9	6	29	15	18	3
Total Park Acreage	454.4	1,550	1,452	700	574.25	946.13	1,002.2	302
Total Park Acreage per 1,000 people	16.03	4.59	5.44	13.97	13.51	10.71	10.31	1.77
Total Hard Surface Trail Miles	20	17.5	1	6.5	13.62	11.72	10.5	4.1
Total Hard Surface Trail Miles per 1,000 people	0.71	0.05	0.004	0.13	0.32	0.24	0.16	0.02
Full-Time Employees	7	15	25	2	19	13.6	13.5	6
Full-Time Employees per 1,000 people	0.25	0.04	0.09	0.04	0.45	0.17	0.25	0.04
Part-Time Employees	0	50	20	8	0	16	25	6
Budget Appropriation	\$2,011,378	\$3,461,734	\$1,971,978	\$396,591 ¹	\$5,022,289	\$2,572,794	\$2,709,440	\$1,155,356
% of Total Government Budget	4%	4%	2.9%	1.6%	6.6%	3.8%	4.1%	3.3%
Expenditure per person for Parks & Rec	\$70.93	\$11.43	\$0.007	\$5.53	\$118.01	\$41.18	\$59.00	\$6.78
Total Revenues from Fees and Charges	\$2,089,373	\$252,830	\$305,155	\$15,000	\$2,511,100	\$1,034,692	\$1,263,050	\$27,695

¹\$276,591 General Fund Appropriations; \$40,000 For Interlocal Trail Maintenance Agreement; roughly \$80,000 From Gas Tax for paths and trails.



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Overall, Hendricks County's population is slightly higher than the average population of the five benchmark agencies, but its growth rate is identical to the average of the other five departments.

Removing the outliers of the rural Whitman County and the urban Fairfield, Hendricks County's total land area per 1,000 people is comparable to that of the other three Indiana counties.

HCP&R by itself has the lowest number of parks, the lowest park acreage, and the lowest park acreage per 1,000 people off all agencies in the comparison. However, adding in the parks and acreage of other parks departments within Hendricks County results in over 30 parks in the county totaling 1,554.72 acres, which provides 9.15 acres per 1,000 people. That places Hendricks County right in the mix with the other agencies.

HCP&R by itself is on the low end of hard surface trail miles, but again, adding mileage found throughout other parks and trails in the county makes Hendricks County comparable to the benchmark agencies. Also, soft surface trails are not considered in this analysis, and HCP&R has 6.5 miles of soft surface trails within McCloud Nature Park with an additional 2 miles coming in Phase I development of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

Staff size is on par with agencies that operate nature parks (Zionsville, Whitman County) but lower than those agencies that operate traditional city parks (water parks, sports fields, playgrounds, etc.). Budget appropriations mirror that pattern, as would be expected, since nature parks require fewer staff and less money to operate than city parks.

HCP&R is on the low end of revenue collection, but its model is to provide as much free programming as possible (or only charge enough to pay for program supplies) to its citizens, as well as free admission to its park and trail. HCP&R does not operate an aquatic center, a gymnasium, sports fields, or other common forms of revenue-collectors.

All things considered, nothing stands out in the comparison between HCP&R (or Hendricks County in general) and the other organizations chosen for this benchmark analysis.

SWOT Analysis

Combining the quantitative measures of the benchmark agency comparison and the qualitative results of the public feedback, HCP&R completed a SWOT analysis, measuring its **s**trengths, **w**eaknesses, **o**pportunities, and **t**hreats.

Strengths

Feedback from the public indicated that the overwhelming majority of park guests are happy with the condition of McCloud Nature Park and the Vandalia Trail.

HCP&R is the clear leader among parks departments within Hendricks County in providing green space; natural beauty; emphasis on ecology, education, and preservation; and a state park-like feel to its properties at a county level. Washington Township Parks & Recreation has recently started focusing on this approach through its new Pecar Park, but most other agencies in the county specialize in recreation and other amenities common to city parks.



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HCP&R staff is paid well, compared to employees of other agencies in the county, and full-time employees enjoy excellent benefits as part of their employment. Under the leadership of the current superintendent, staff morale is high.

HCP&R has a good working relationship with the Hendricks County Council, the Hendricks County Commissioners, other departments within Hendricks County Government, and other agencies and businesses in the area. Benefits of this good relationship include consistent annual funding, support of HCP&R's projects, and regular constructive feedback.

Because of the experience and skill level of the maintenance crew, HCP&R can complete a lot of projects in-house that would cost considerably more money if contracted out.

Hendricks County residents overwhelmingly feel that parks are important to residents and to the community. As a whole, residents are very supportive of HCP&R.

HCP&R is, for the most part, on par with five other parks and recreation agencies from around Indiana and the United States in terms of staffing, funding, size, and other factors described above. There are no glaring deficiencies within HCP&R compared to other departments.

Weaknesses

As described in a previous section of this document, the public feedback revealed a serious breakdown in communication between HCP&R and Hendricks County citizens. Many respondents to the survey assume HCP&R operates all parks within Hendricks County, despite HCP&R's attempts to educate the public on its role in the county's parks system. Many respondents had never heard about the construction of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park until receiving a survey. A substantial percentage of residents have never visited McCloud Nature Park or the Vandalia Trail. HCP&R needs to find more reliable ways to communicate with the public.

The locations of McCloud Nature Park and HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail seem to deter many people from visiting, as evidenced by the public feedback. Both properties are located on the extreme western edge of the county in its most rural and sparsely populated areas, both bordering Putnam County. Residents of the eastern half of the county find it quicker and easier to enjoy town parks or parks located in Marion County, such as Eagle Creek Park. HCP&R expects W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park's location within the more populated half of the county to lend itself to much higher visitation than McCloud and the Vandalia Trail.

Four members of the HCP&R staff are based in the main office in Danville, while the remaining 8 employees are based out of McCloud Nature Park in North Salem, about 15-20 minutes away. This is not an ideal situation, and it has occasionally resulted in breakdowns in communication between department leadership and the rest of the HCP&R staff. The Park Board, in consultation with the HCP&R superintendent and other members of the staff, should discuss ways and means of improving internal communication and deployment of human resources.

Opportunities

Grant money is available through a number of sources for a wide variety of projects. HCP&R already takes advantage of these opportunities and applies for grant money from time to time, depending on what projects



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are underway. Submission of this Comprehensive Master Plan will also make HCP&R eligible to apply for grants through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

HCP&R is fortunate to have a large contingency of volunteers available and willing to help the department with daily operations, property maintenance, and special events. This provides the department with the opportunity to complete daily operations and host events at a reduced cost. These volunteers are vital to HCP&R's ability to keep their properties looking good and operations running smoothly.

HCP&R is likely going to need to relocate its main office within the next two years. A new Hendricks County Jail is under construction next door to the current main office, and the building where the main office is situated may be razed or repurposed in the near future. Having 70 acres of undeveloped land at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park provides one option for a new main office to be constructed there. The healthy relationship with county decision-makers has already opened the discussion about alternatives that will benefit HCP&R while still maintaining maximum fiscal responsibility.

Threats

With a substantial amount of HCP&R's budget coming from Food & Beverage taxes and Innkeepers taxes, the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative effects on numbers of people eating in restaurants and staying in hotels in Hendricks County leaves the department vulnerable to significantly reduced financial resources in coming years. Much of the annual budget for park development and improvements, as well as a significant portion of three full-time employees' salaries and benefits, come from Food & Beverage and Innkeepers taxes. A large reduction in these funding sources would make normal operations quite difficult for HCP&R. A complete loss of these funding sources would be catastrophic for the department.



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Priorities and Action Schedule

Based on public feedback, the needs assessment for HCP&R, information about other parks departments, and their own vision and desires, the Hendricks County Park Board has developed a list of priorities for HCP&R over the next five years.

Between 2021 and 2025, the Park Board would like to spend an estimated \$1.75 million to \$2.15 million on the Vandalia Trail, developing a master plan for the property, acquiring additional property for an extension of the trail, and extending the trail between Amo and Clayton.

During the same time period, the Park Board would like to spend an estimated \$235,000 at McCloud Nature Park. About \$100,000 would be spent on developing the north side of the park, while about \$50,000 would be spent on investigating the expansion of the park. The remaining estimate of \$85,000 would be spent on chip-and-sealing the main drive at the park, as well as making repairs to Mill Cottage there.

Also during the same time period, the Park Board would like to spend an estimated \$950,000 at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Of that amount, an estimated \$450,000 is earmarked for the possible purchase price, closing costs, inspection fees, and other costs of acquiring an additional 20 acres currently owned by the Gibbs family. If the Gibbs family is unwilling to sell, that money would not be spent. About \$350,000 would be spent to complete installation of Phase I amenities to the park and some reforestation there, and about \$150,000 would be spent on Phase II.

An additional \$100,000 is earmarked for relocation of the main office, and another \$100,000 is set aside for purchase of any other property that may become available within Hendricks County.

Combined, the Park Board has an estimated \$3,135,000 to \$3,535,000 in priorities over the next five years, in addition to normal annual expenses and staff salaries.

If HCP&R's 2021 budget of \$1,155,356 is multiplied by 5 years, one could estimate a total of \$5,776,780 being available to the department from 2021 through 2025. About \$508,035 will be spent on staff salaries in 2021, which translates to a little over \$2,500,000 over the course of five years. That would leave roughly \$3,200,000 available over the five-year span for normal annual expenses plus the \$3,135,000 to \$3,535,000 in the Park Board's priorities.

If all of the Park Board's priorities are addressed and all of the cost estimates are reasonably accurate, HCP&R will need to secure additional funding through alternative sources – such as grants, donations, etc. – over the course of the next five years. Any negative impact to HCP&R's budget over the next five years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and reductions in Food & Beverage and Innkeepers taxes as a result would place further importance on securing alternative funding.

The Hendricks County Commissioners and Hendricks County Council have repeatedly expressed instructions for HCP&R and the Park Board to develop land that they already own before acquiring additional land. In order to maintain the positive working relationship with Hendricks County's elected decision-makers, HCP&R and the Park Board would be wise to adhere to these instructions and to keep the decision-makers well-informed of any desires and attempts to acquire additional land.



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Priorities and Action Schedule - 2021 to 2025				
Year	Property	Action	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
2021-22	Vandalia Trail	Develop master plan for Vandalia Trail	\$100,000	Professional Fees (County General) budget line
2021-25	Vandalia Trail	Acquire all necessary land or easements between Amo and Clayton for trail expansion	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Land Acquisition (Food & Beverage) budget line; Park Non-Reverting Capital Fund 1178
2023-25	Vandalia Trail	Construct a trail two (2) miles west of Clayton	\$1,500,000	Grants; Development of County Parks (Innkeepers) budget line
2024-25	Vandalia Trail	Investigate land acquisition east of Clayton	\$50,000	Land Acquisition (Food & Beverage) budget line; Park Non-Reverting Capital Fund 1178
2021-25	McCloud	Continue development of north side of park	\$100,000	Other Park Improvements (Food & Beverage) budget line
2021-25	McCloud	Investigate expansion of park	\$50,000	Land Acquisition (Food & Beverage) budget line; Park Non-Reverting Capital Fund 1178
2022-24	McCloud	Repair Mill Cottage	\$35,000	Other Park Improvements (Food & Beverage) budget line
2024-25	McCloud	Chip-and-seal entrance to park	\$50,000	Other Park Improvements (Food & Beverage) budget line
2021	W.S. Gibbs	Finalize implementation of Phase I amenities	\$320,000	Other Park Improvements (Food & Beverage), Development of County Parks (Innkeepers), and Professional Fees (County General) budget lines; Sodalís Nature Park payment



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2021-22	W.S. Gibbs	Investigate acquisition of final 20 acres of the Gibbs family property (purchase price, closing costs, inspection fees, attorney fees, etc.)	\$450,000	Land Acquisition (Food & Beverage) budget line; Park Non-Reverting Capital Fund 1178
2022-23	W.S. Gibbs	Develop plan for Phase II	\$150,000	Professional Fees (County General) budget line
2022-23	W.S. Gibbs	Reforestation	\$30,000	Other Park Improvements (Food & Beverage), Development of County Parks (Innkeepers) budget lines
2021-23	Main Office	Relocate main office	\$100,000	Other Park Improvements (Food & Beverage), Development of County Parks (Innkeepers) budget lines
2021-25	Hendricks County	Investigate land acquisition throughout Hendricks County	\$100,000	Land Acquisition (Food & Beverage) budget line; Park Non-Reverting Capital Fund 1178

Acquisition of land for park and trail property is important, given Hendricks County's designation as a critical county by the State of Indiana's SCORP. The extension of the Vandalia Trail across the county to Plainfield Parks & Recreation's section of the trail is a necessary component of the National Road Heritage Trail - one of the Indiana DNR's Visionary Trails.

However, the Park Board intends to be cautious in spending, consistent with the concerns of the Hendricks County Commissioners and Council about potential COVID-19 pandemic impacts on vital funding sources for HCP&R in coming years. They will keep the lines of communication with the county's decision-makers wide open as plans for further park development evolve.



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Public Presentation of CMP

Upon receiving constructive feedback from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources on the rough draft of this Comprehensive Master Plan, a public presentation was scheduled and held on Monday, March 1, 2021, at 7 p.m. in the Hendricks County Government Center in Danville.

Hendricks County had been downgraded by the Indiana Department of Health from “red” COVID-19 status in December to “orange” status from late December through February, and then to “yellow” status by the time the public presentation took place, which made HCP&R staff much more comfortable with holding a public meeting during evening hours than was the case for the public input meeting in December.

The meeting was advertised in advance through *The Republican* newspaper (see Appendix C) where it appeared on the front page above the fold, through HCP&R’s website and social media, and in press releases sent to all local media. Members of the Hendricks County Council, Hendricks County Commissioners, and Hendricks County Park Board were all personally invited to the public presentation by HCP&R superintendent Ryan Lemley.

Due to the size of the CMP document and the cost of printing hard copies of it, HCP&R instead provided a hyperlink to an online version of the CMP on its website and through social media, and at the time of the meeting, a QR code was provided for members of the public to access the document online.

Superintendent Ryan Lemley and assistant superintendent Eric Ivie represented the HCP&R staff. Hendricks County Councilmember Larry Hesson, Timothy C., and Kenneth S. attended from the public. All three members of the public indicated that they had reviewed the CMP prior to the public presentation.

Ivie gave an hour-long overview of HCP&R and the CMP, including the Park Board’s list of priorities and actions, throughout which he and Lemley responded to questions from the members of the public in attendance.

Q: When you submit this CMP to the Indiana DNR, does it go to the Division of Outdoor Recreation?

A: Yes, it does. Greg Beilfuss with the DNR’s Division of Outdoor Recreation is our contact person for this project.

Q: How do you count visitation on the Vandalia Trail?

A: There are infrared counters at various locations along the Vandalia Trail, and when a person or a bicycle passes by, it breaks the beam and records the visitation. We use a magnetometer at McCloud Nature Park to record vehicles entering the park, and that’s also the system that will be used at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

Q: Would Hendricks County’s status as a “critical county” by the Indiana SCORP improve HCP&R’s chances to secure grant money for projects through the State of Indiana?

A: In some cases, yes. For example, in the Next Level Trails grant process, being a “critical county” adds some weight to an agency’s application. Various departments and organizations within Hendricks County have been awarded Next Level Trails grant money already, and HCP&R has applied, too, in an effort to expand the Vandalia Trail eastward from Amo to Clayton. However, HCP&R does not yet own or have access to all of the needed land between Amo and Clayton, so our application has been understandably denied twice. We continue to work on acquiring the parcels or access to the parcels between the two towns and will apply a third time for a Next Level



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Trails grant, but unless we have clear access from one town to the other, we're not terribly hopeful that we'll receive any grant funds.

Q: In the survey, did 81% of the respondents say that they've never visited any portion of the Vandalia Trail? Or just your portion?

A: The survey specified that we were asking only about our portion of the Vandalia Trail. If a survey was completed in Plainfield about users of that portion of the Vandalia Trail, we suspect that the results would be very different.

Q: Do you have any data on the equestrian usage of the Vandalia Trail?

A: Other than the survey data, no. We do not have trail counters on the equestrian trail.

Follow-up by the person who asked the question: I have been involved with trails for quite a number of years, and I had interactions with the DNR and some federal agencies with the Hoosier National Forest, and they always insisted that trails had to be multi-use. So my question and concern is that the equestrian component adds additional cost, not only in terms of construction but also in terms of maintenance, and does anybody even really use it? My impression is they do not. Therefore, we are wasting time and effort and money.

Q: It doesn't cost anything to maintain the equestrian trail, does it? My impression is that maintenance is completed by a volunteer group.

A: HCP&R installed the equestrian trail and has maintained it, and it's been an unwritten agreement that volunteers from the equestrian users would help maintain it. In practicality, however, that rarely happens. They do occasionally assist us with minor repairs, and we appreciate that, but when it's something major, they rely on our maintenance crew to complete the repairs.

Q: When you say that people want bicycle trails at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, does that mean mountain biking trails? Or paved biking trails?

A: We didn't differentiate between the two when we offered "bicycle trails" as an option on the survey. When the time comes to start planning for Phase II of the park, we'll do some more research on which one people prefer and how much each style of bicycle trail would cost to construct and maintain.

Q: Is part of the consideration of expanding McCloud Nature Park to include connecting with the B&O Trail?

A: Yes. We have had many internal discussions about somehow connecting the B&O Trail to McCloud Nature Park as the B&O expands westward into North Salem. Land acquisition is one thing to consider, but also our staff size. When we operate park land, we want to exceed expectations, not just meet expectations, so part of the consideration is the impact that any expansion would have on our maintenance crew and our ability to maintain our current properties and any additional property.



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Q: As you reforest W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, will you work with the DNR on that?

A: Yes, we absolutely will consult with the Indiana DNR's Division of Forestry on a project like that. Their expertise is crucial on a reforestation effort of this magnitude.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:03 p.m.

The day after the Public Presentation Meeting, Lemley attended a regularly scheduled Hendricks County Council meeting. During that meeting, and on the record, County Councilmember Larry Hesson reported to the entire Council that he attended HCP&R's meeting and believes that HCP&R is in good hands and has a bright future ahead of it. He is happy with the HCP&R's plans for the next five years.



Appendix A: Survey Comments

Below is an unedited list of all comments received from the public through the CMP Survey.

Q: How satisfied are you with McCloud Nature Park? (8 comments)

- I have only been there 1 time. It was nice, but it did not have anything that made me want to drive the distance when I have wonderful parks that are very close to my home.
- The grown-ups have taken over.
- Didn't know anything about festivals -- maybe advertise them more. Or I need to look better.
- The trails are not well marked or maintained. The forest is not too mature.
- Not able to get off connect to through other neighborhoods
- I realize it is a small park but pretty. I wish the trails were longer
- It feels a little small, but it's nice.
- Beautiful place! This is a gem - part of the reason is the low attendance - I've suggested it to several friends with immuno-compromised children because of the low number of people who are there.

Q: What attracts you to McCloud Nature Park? (24 comments)

- n/a
- fall colors
- Quiet, secluded
- Not very busy. Love the nature and solitude.
- Summer Fun Run.
- Love the huge white oaks.
- We are a Boy Scout family and have participated in merit badge workshops. Also, we help [Park Naturalist] Sarah [Wolf] with geocaching projects and service projects.
- McCloud is beautiful!
- None.
- Grandkids look forward to our trips. Love the trails and truss bridge.
- School field trips
- Library, outreach
- Picnic area.
- I enjoy educational opportunities while in various natural habitats! And interacting with the helpful staff, who are always energetic and informative!
- have not been to any festivals due to personal conflicts, but would enjoy visiting.
- Field Trips
- natural spaces, prairie and habitat
- Astronomy club meetings
- Adult crafting events
- Lovely!
- Forest
- Weekend Adult projects
- fall colors run
- Beach on the river! Great for kids!



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Q: How satisfied are you with HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail? (7 comments)

- I much preferred the trail before it was paved. If I want to walk/run on a paved trail, I could do that on the road.
- Needs extended.
- Parking for horse trailers is difficult.
- Maintenance poor at times -- sticks & debris on trail.
- Difficult to access from my home. No other connections through out the county
- More paved trails please
- We live directly on the trail. there is no fence between our property and the parks property and kids have been seen leaving the trail and coming onto our property and into our woods. the trail crosses our driveway, there used to be signs on the trail to advise cross traffic does not stop and private drive, these signs were removed for upgrade work a year ago and have not been replaced. we cannot see people on the trail until we are ON the trail. I have been mowing the parks property that abuts to our property all year because the parks mowers have NEVER mowed it since the trail's installment. the horse crossing between Amo and Coatesville is extremely dangerous. there needs to be a foot bridge for the horses to cross the creek. between the sharp and slick rocks, a horse and therefore a rider could be seriously injured which could potentially result in a terrible lawsuit to the department and/or county. there is a beautiful spot next to the creek that would be a great place for a picnic table and rest spot. . .

Q: What activities do you participate in while on HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail? (2 comments)

- Geocaching.
- Bird, animal, and people watching.

Q: How supportive are you of the eastward expansion of the Vandalia Trail? (9 comments)

- Supportive if the horse trail is included in the plan.
- This does not affect me as I do not live near this location and would not use this trail.
- Local trails are OK, but are used by a small percentage of the local population. I see no major benefit (other than to major "bike enthusiasts") to be able to ride longer distances. And many of them use county roads for their rides. Why should local taxes be used for limited local, or non-local population?
- We have crumbling infrastructure and the amount of tax payer money that is wasted on these stupid and senseless projects is mind-boggling. I know a lot of people and I have only met 2 people who have ever used any of these wasteful ridiculous projects and that is a small portion of the Monon Trail down town. What a waste of hard working taxpayer funds!
- I ride the trail in Plainfield and am looking forward to it being connected to the Amo portion.
- Concerns of using land that the owners are not compensated for. Don't overuse easements.
- Not the best areas to be connected to
- I am supportive HOWEVER, I would more so very strongly FIRST like to see a way for Bridgewater and housing in the same area (Ex Timberbend, Apple creek) have a safe access point to the Plainfield trails on this side of Vandalia Trail. It isnt even safe access to the new trail at the AJAA fields currently
- I don't think this is the business of government.



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Q: What amenities would you like to see at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park? (57 comments)

- Overnight camping.
- I do not have enough information to have an opinion on amenities.
- No opinion. I will not visit.
- Swimming facility
- Splash pad
- None. I live by this park. Not happy that it is here.
- Adult playground
- Primitive camping (tents).
- Clean bathrooms.
- Equestrian trails.
- Please have many convenient restrooms. Small children can't hold it.
- Not interested.
- Please no dog park.
- Family outings.
- I probably won't use that park.
- None. Not going there.
- Senior playground.
- Horseback riding space! We are seeing more and more land lost to subdivisions. It would be nice to see nature preserved and used for less building space and more outdoor amenities!
- I'm almost 90. No interest here.
- Pools
- Don't believe in these parks and trails.
- Pickleball
- Camping area. Affordable park fees so not only the well-off can use, but free to poverty level families.
- Will not be there because of our age.
- Land to observe stars/astronomy/dark sites away from lights.
- Dog park
- Several of the adult programs are held during the day. Those of us who still work but either have older children or none do not get to participate.
- Buildings with roof and tables can be used for seniors' art clubs approx. 2.5 hours a week when senior center is closed.
- MTB trails
- Stage for live venues -- music, festivals
- Lacrosse and soccer fields!!!
- Outdoor amphitheater -- maybe created by carving out levels of dirt in a mound, creating tiered grass-covered seating.
- Pickleball courts, dog park
- Dog park
- Will not use due to location.
- Water attraction
- Nets for soccer.



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- Exercise trails with workout stations and instructions on how to complete the task. All ages. Also, a senior citizens playground. Playground for all -- old and young. Other countries have these and they are awesome!
- No preference
- dog park
- a skatepark
- natural habitat for existing wildlife
- Community garden
- Camping out in a campground and canoe for waterways.
- Enclosed dog park
- not sure
- softball or baseball diamonds
- None- it's an absolute waste of our tax dollar and some of the most ridiculous idea ever!
- Benches
- Mountain bike trails would be amazing so people don't have to go to southwestway park.
- An indoor place with big windows and binoculars when weather isn't great. Also bird feeders.
- A dedicated Hendricks County Parks Office in order to facilitate community programs from a centralized position in the county while also serving as their main office for community access.
- Adult only area(s)
- I doubt we will go - too far away
- Nice restrooms
- not the business of government
- Currently use paths at Avon Town Hall Park 4 times per week for running/walking & love it! We also continue to Washington Township Park & end at the dog park with the dogs.

Q: From which sources do you obtain information about community events? (30 comments)

- Information posted at Rec Center.
- Would like more advertising.
- Avon magazine.
- I don't listen to radio much, NPR is the most listened to. I don't watch much TV either. Most of my community info comes from web searches, word of mouth, and local newspapers.
- Mail.
- Park signs
- The ICON, if the mail delivers it. The mail does not deliver the ICON half the time. You need to come up with another way to have the Hendricks County ICON delivered. That's the only way I know what's going on.
- The ICON is NOT delivered to us. How do we get on the mailing list? We enjoy it very much when we can find one.
- Mail
- Internet search. National Geographic.
- Text messages ahead of special events, so families can plan for family outings to take time off and budget for vacations, too.
- Google search
- Paper pamphlets sent to homes/residents.



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- Avon magazine.
- Posters in park.
- Exploring.
- Mail.
- I rarely learn about community events until they are already over. :(
- Occasionally pick up a Brownsburg or Avon magazine.
- Mail
- checking nature or county parks near me; nature preserves and dog friendly parks; Indy magazine
- posters - informational signs
- various internet sources
- Google News
- Signs in community
- Sign at Hummel Park
- Seeing what's going on and asking questions
- I don't have a computer or a smart phone. My number one choice would be something sent to me in the mail.
- Plainfield App, Carmucci FB site
- Don't listen or watch local news

Q: What are your preferred radio and/or television stations for obtaining news about community events?

- Television
 - FOX: FOX59 **(x43)**
 - NBC: WTHR-13 **(x41)**
 - ABC: WRTV-6 **(x25)**
 - The CW: WISH-8 **(x14)**
 - CBS: WTTV-4 **(x12)**
 - FOX News **(x4)**
 - PBS: WFYI **(x3)**
 - Channel 12
 - WYTV
- Radio
 - WFMS 95.5 FM **(x15)**
 - WIBC 93.1 FM **(x14)**
 - WLHK 97.1 FM **(x11)**
 - WKLU 101.9 FM (K-LOVE) **(x9)**
 - WZPL 99.5 FM **(x8)**
 - WYXB 105.7 FM **(x6)**
 - WFYI 90.1 FM (NPR) **(x5)**
 - WNDE 1260 AM **(x3)**
 - WJJK 104.5 FM **(x3)**
 - WNDX 93.9 FM **(x3)**
 - WTTS 92.3 FM **(x3)**
 - WNOW 100.9 FM **(x2)**
 - WOLT 103.3 FM **(x2)**



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- WNTR 107.9 FM
- WQRA 90.5 FM
- WHHH 96.3 FM
- WFBQ 94.7 FM
- WFIV 103.7 FM
- WICR 88.7 FM
- WSPN 89.1 FM
- Sirius XM

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us? (204 comments)

- While I don't get out to parks (handicapped) I would like to see what we already have maintained to a high level. I lived 1 house from the Monon Trail and it caused security issues to homeowners and users. My running days are over but there's spot of the trail here that I would not have run because they are to remote or not safe.
- can't wait to see what the future brings!
- An aquatic center would be a great benefit to our community. At this time, I drive to Avon for this amenity.
- Love the rail trails. Avid biker.
- The splash pad in Avon isn't very friendly for young kids/toddlers. The splash pad in Brownsburg has more low-spray fountains that don't spray the kids. It just allows the kids to play in the water in their own control. Our daughter has some sensory processing problems and hates being splashed but loves water. Maybe consider some less-intense water-play options for younger toddlers and/or kids with special needs.
- Thanks for all you do!
- No
- Free swimming for the poor or disabled.
- I love the Avon Town Hall Park! Beautiful park, lake, angel memorial park. Lovely trails.
- We are not physically able to go to parks and COVID-19 also keeps us home.
- Parks are important to a lot of adults and children. It's always good to see updates and changes made, as long as costs are kept down.
- Connecting the White Lick Creek Trail south to the Plainfield trail system, with connections to all the neighborhoods in between.
- Thanks for sending the survey. Due to an advancing case of old age, I don't get around as I once did. I even volunteered at McCloud at one time and enjoyed the bees and trees. I do follow news from the parks in the Republican and ICON. I also have received the parks' publication. Two dogs ago, I enjoyed the Vandalia Trail walks -- now it's only a wish to do so. I'm returning the survey = RECYCLING. Sorry I can't help.
- More pickleball courts.
- Thank you for all you do to build and maintain Hendricks County parks and nature areas. They are so important in a rural/suburb area.
- Am new to Indiana, just bought a house in Danville. Haven't been here long enough to really have an opinion of the different parks.



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- Thank you! We really love our parks and appreciate all you do!
- I am not a person that should be filling out this form. I have been active all my life, but at age 83 I am limited as what I can do, but love all that you are doing for trails, parks, etc.
- We love Sodalís Nature Park. Thank you for having free admission. We like the Little Free Libraries that are at the parks. Give and take.
- Love Hummel Park -- our favorite.
- Disc golf!!
- Park with campground. Horse park for trail riding. Outdoor pool for swim events. Baseball diamonds, soccer fields on grounds.
- It is sad that Danville has no trail/path system. So many towns near us, even smaller than Danville, have trails. I believe that we have been told several times we would be getting trails and it still has not happened. Please -- we need bike/walking/running trails.
- I am the only person living here and I am 81 years old. My husband died 23 years ago. I cannot fill this out because I am unacquainted with the places you are asking about.
- Avon needs more sidewalks finished to connect neighborhoods to trails. There are many sidewalks that go nowhere.
- More open-air performance venues.
- Now is not the time to be spending money. Don't raise our taxes.
- I wish there was camping available at McCloud. We love the prairie maze every year. Sarah Wolf is awesome! Can't wait for festivals to come back!
- I would like to see land be protected for ecologically significant areas above all else and want more quiet spaces to visit. There needs to be a place for this because so much is being developed. There needs to be a balance of green and concrete spaces.
- Parks are very important! Keep up the plans in place. In prior years, we took advantage of these facilities with our children. Thanks to Hendricks County!
- I really want a bike path from 100 S. to Washington Township where we don't cross 36 twice pulling 2 small kids on a bike. This would be amazing! Thank you.
- Plainfield downtown needs to attract more businesses from diverse background population. Rebranding Town of Plainfield to an image of accepting community. Avon made lots of improvements learning from Fishers/Carmel. Advertising Plainfield as opportunity providing city to all. Changing image of not town of warehouses but city of parks/trails/family fun and rich with history. Love the town of Plainfield. Ready to help too.
- Overall, I enjoy and love living in the Plainfield community. I like to visit Sodalís, Hummel, and Swinford parks.
- Specific infrastructure/structures/facilities consume a lot of limited resources to build/maintain. Open fields can substitute for structured ball diamonds, bleachers, etc.
- McCloud is great. Remember when it was started.
- I hope you can develop more horse trails. I would love to have a trail around McCloud and eventually tie it in to the B&O equestrian trail. There is a need for trailer parking. It is so nice to have a place to go for a quick ride locally. When I go to state and federal parks, I feel like I need to stay a couple of days to compensate for fuel and time to get there. Brown County, Tippecanoe, and Midwest south of Bloomington are the closest horse trails for me other than the Vandalia equestrian trail. I ride every month of the year.



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- As a resident of Plainfield, I am proud of the parks and trails here. I would like to one day see bike/walk trails that connect Plainfield, Danville, Avon and Brownsburg. Let's get the Vandalia Trail extension across the county done! Indiana needs this to encourage physical activity and wellness.
- Since moving to Plainfield, I have been very impressed with the parks and bike trails. I tell everyone how great this is for our community. I raised my daughter here and have many memories of our park visits. Thank you! P.S. The dogs walk my husband on the trails EVERY DAY!
- Thank you for keeping Hendricks County so beautiful! The parks make our environment so much better! Are there porta-potties on the Vandalia Trail?
- Would love to see more water features for kids (splash pads, pools, etc.) that are cost-friendly.
- When my grandchildren were younger, we spent many hours at Williams Park and thoroughly enjoyed it. Please keep up the good work. Thanks so much for many wonderful memories.
- You need a dog park. It is important to have a dog park.
- I think dog parks are overdone. Please let's keep this clean for the family. A lot of dog owners are not very respectful of everyone.
- We personally prefer parks and recreation areas to be secluded in nature and not next to businesses or homes. Build onto creeks and rivers. Great for tubing and fishing. An area that is secure for wildlife that protects them from us and us from them but we could still see them from a safe distance. Conserving wildlife is very important to us! Put more information about wildlife animals in the parks.
- Thank you for providing a mail-in survey.
- Nature is important to our mental and physical health. Keep up the good work!
- Would be a lot more interested if we could take our great grandchildren to McCloud. Think McCloud has very interesting programs.
- Indoors farmer's markets in fall/winter/spring.
- We would like a free fishing pond in Plainfield for all (adults and children). Is Sodalís Park available for that recreational activity? (Or could it be?)
- Thank you!
- I do not visit the parks.
- Restrooms. Water for drinking.
- I'm 87 years old and don't get out much. Don't think this survey applies to me. My daughter has taken me to Turkey Run and to Spring Mill in the last 2 years. Enjoyed both.
- I would love to see more independently-owned (non-franchise) businesses! A festival/fair more than once per year for Hendricks County would be great! Battle of the Bands, maybe?
- We love the parks in Hendricks County!
- I see wooded trails as an invitation for crime. Spend our money on something more helpful to the community, especially the children and teens.
- I do not use the parks.
- I am disabled and unable to use the parks very easily. I'm homebound and can't answer these questions.
- We just need more pools. A water park would be wonderful in Danville or Avon area. Year-round would be spectacular. The Danville pool is too small with the growth we have had.
- Wish we had a local newspaper.
- I like Sodalís Nature Park, it's closer to me. It would be nice to have a small playground.
- Keep up the good work!



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- Thank you! The parks are so important to quality of life. :) #staypositive
- Continue to expand the bike trails in Hendricks County. A trail from Brownsburg to Avon to Plainfield would be great. Connecting existing trails would be fantastic.
- Hendricks County does a great job with their parks. So lucky to live here.
- Very happy with all parks in Hendricks County. They are clean and well maintained.
- Parks on the north side of Brownsburg would be wonderful.
- So thankful for our beautiful parks! Our family really loves disc golf and I would love another place to play in Hendricks County besides Avon Town Hall Park.
- Would like to see cabins for rent, horseback riding, and fishing events. I lived in Wyoming for almost 30 years, I was in the Air Force for 4 years, civil service 2 years, and retired from state government after 20 years of service. At the Base, the Recreation Center hosted snow skiing trips, river rafting, camping, hiking, repelling and mountain climbing, fishing excursions, visitors to state parks for families (Yellowstone). Also, the state had a website just for "tourism" and fun activities for all citizens to enjoy. Entry fees based on age and residency. Check out their website, Wyoming "tourism." Also, volunteers play an important part of all successful events and programs. FE Warren AFB allows any military service person or civil servant the opportunity to volunteer at the "Biggest Daddy" of them all -- "Cheyenne Frontier Days." This event also has "night shows" every evening with "Big Name" Country and Rock singers and bands. Volunteers help with seating ticket holders. When the show begins, the volunteers get to stay and watch the shows. Also, volunteers during the day can stay and watch the rodeo for free. Everyone is identified with a vest. People also help with parking and numerous other events or wherever they are needed. It lasts 10 days. Hope this helps.
- I am Hendricks County born and bred. Love the parks and trails. Keep up the great work.
- Sorry to be no more help. We have visited Hummel Park a few times and enjoyed it. We are in our late 80s. Our back yard is our park.
- Need to target seniors. They cannot walk long distances. I prefer public golf courses at reasonable green fees for all, seniors and young. Would like to see astronomy observatory land to accommodate back yard astronomers. Star observation sites. Need clubs with an indoor walking sitting swimming pool / warm water for seniors, saunas, whirlpools, golf courses, table tennis, low impact exercise machines, saloon for public lectures, science/astronomy computers.
- We moved here 3 years ago and are very happy with Avon parks and very nice areas around us!! Thank you!
- Love the things listed at McCloud Nature Park. Will plan a visit there. My husband and I ride our bikes on the Vandalia Trail in Plainfield a lot. Park for children near/to west of Del Webb in Plainfield is needed.
- Please ensure there are some type of emergency notification similar to what is on college campuses in the parks. I have noticed while walking some of the trails if someone were to have some type of medical emergency and they were alone, not everyone carries a cell phone when on a trail, they have no way of contacting medical or police to help.
- Creation of parks I think is a better place for residents to enjoy nature at the same time to exercise with family and friends.
- I've lived in assisted living since Nov. 2019 using a wheelchair and don't anticipate having any use for the facilities.
- How does one know next time there is a need for a parks board member?



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- Some parks need better trash receptacles and to repair broken or outdated playground equipment. Trails with reading facts, i.e. stories. Love the parks around here.
- These park areas should be equipped with clean & maintenance of plumb bathroom facilities & maintained. Also monitored by security to insure the safety of the residents & children!! Maybe develop a community garden & such to have & maintain by kids, teens, seniors, or adults.
- I would like to see some bird watching groups. Also, education on bird watching. Pickleball courts.
- I rarely hear about community events. There needs to be a better way to get in touch with the younger crowd of people to share what is going on in the community. Parks and Rec is a huge part of the community. Programming is extremely important during the summer and winter months, especially for single parents. I feel a lot of people don't know about the programming that is put on for kids like daycares or after school programs or if there is even such a thing. I do believe finding out a better way to advertise events and the parks would get the community more involved.
- More mountain bike trails
- I'm 63 years old and cycle on a regular basis. I ride 30-50 miles and wish the rail trails connected throughout the community. It's far safer to stay off the busy roads, but I can't cover the miles I want to without doing that. Please start making those connections before I age out! I wish the Vandalia Trail was paved into Greencastle.
- We really enjoy the numerous parks, connecting trails. Would really love more fairs, festivals -- also involving live music.
- It would be nice to have the bike trails in Hendricks County connect with the trails in Marion County and other surrounding counties. Also, a map of trails with bathrooms and water fountains marked.
- Really want biking and hiking trails! Thank you! I did not know about these hiking opportunities. How can I learn more?
- Hendricks County is in dire need of facilities both indoor and outdoor for lacrosse and soccer.
- Thank you for all your staff's service to our country's needs, solar power for places in park, video cameras and call boxes for emergencies in areas of park for safety.
- Due to digital TV format, I cannot get local TV, and radio stations here suck! I will not listen to them.
- I believe that Hendricks County Parks are a superb asset to our communities in the county! The parks are well maintained, the staff is always helpful and informative, and willing to help others, along with the programs that are offered are stimulating, interesting, and enlightening! In today's world, being outdoors, experiencing nature, and taking the opportunity to expand one's knowledge of the environment and wildlife is so very important! Parks can be our salvation to keeping our sanity in these days of the pandemic, but also for the future! The health and vitality of a community is reflected by the Parks & Recreation offered to its citizens!!
- Would be interested in seeing more bird-watching areas.
- I didn't even know these parks existed. I have never read about them in the ICON. Not all seniors have internet. You need to keep them in mind.
- I enjoy the parks. I would like to see more of them, especially nature parks.
- Just moved here in June. We have not had time to enjoy parks yet.
- Appreciate how well-maintained the B&O Trail is -- especially the area around the dog park, and all of the safety measures for crossing roads.
- Bike riders ride recklessly on trails -- to fast -- its not a highway they need to keep casual. Speed limits (?) maybe



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- I would like to see the trail in Washington Township Park be connected to the trails in Brownsburg and Plainfield. I also like to remind the concerned department that the bike trail in Washington Township Park is in great need of maintenance. Thanks.
- In a larger park, have more access to porta-johns. Would like to get flyers in the mail.
- No thanks
- Your parks and trails are wonderful for the community to be active and participate in. Thank you for your attention to your residents.
- Incorporate diversity/inclusion focused festivals/activities in Hendricks County.
- A water park or similar feature would be most welcome in the Brownsburg/Pittsboro area. Something similar to what Boone Co has in Lebanon would be ideal.
- My husband is 80 almost 81. I am 79 almost 80 and neither of us are in good health to go to parks but both feel it is important to have good trails and parks.
- Secluded walk paths that may have wildlife sightings including deer, rare birds, eagles, etc.
- Personal safety is an issue that is often times overlooked by entities like this. Females are sometimes scared to use hiking trails or running paths that are unpopulated. I know in the past I have been uncomfortable running on some of Blanton Woods trails just because of the surprise factor when you come upon people unexpectedly. I have since quit running alone in this area just because I am female. It would behoove this entity to seek some female opinions when planning for new or remodeled facilities. It would be my guess that most of the people making the decisions are male and do not consider what it is like to be female and using these facilities.
- Hendricks County Parks are beautiful and very well kept. The bicycle trails and water parks are a big plus for our community. Excited to see the finished water park in Avon. Flower gardens and vegetable gardens would be a plus for all age activities and a beautiful greenhouse with tropical plants and streams such as the Garfield Park on the southside has had for years. Zip lines for the adventurous. So many ideas to make our community even better. Thank you, Hendricks County Parks Dept. We are growing together for a great community.
- We enjoy rib fests, music fests. Festivals with music and food I feel like are very popular and we enjoy the most. Historical festivals are fun and bring people out.
- You guys are great. Thank you so much.
- Wondering if the Avon Park on Dan Jones and 100 S. is going to house a playground or fields or shelters or a sitting area?
- New resident in 2020.
- The questions about putting things in order 1-10 are too detailed and too many choices in my opinion (at least for people who don't go to or have never heard of these parks). Also, the birthday of the household request doesn't make any sense. Why would it make a difference who from the household fills the questionnaire out?
- I think parks and recreation areas are vital, essential places for everyone in the community. During these polarized days in our country, parks are places all of us can go escape our lives' daily pressures and burn off calories and unwind. Parks are critical for our mental health.
- More involvement from the community in "Park Clean-Up Days." Involve us in keeping the parks beautiful and make it a learning event. Teach the reasons why forestry, preservation, and nature are important in a park or home setting. Work/volunteer to learn programs that can be applied in our



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neighborhoods. Ownership of our community will bring pride to each of us. Involve us. Teach us. Make all of Brownsburg a Nature Park of beauty!

- adding a few primitive or basic electrical camp grounds you could bike or park and walk to would be a great addition in the wooded areas of the Plainfield Parks. close easy and fun events for families
- Keep in mind that many dog owners love to take them to the trails as well, so try to allow dogs on leash in as many trails as possible. thank you for your time
- Thanks for all you do to help make Hendricks County a good place to live and work.
- Thank you for the parks!
- No
- Keep up the good work!!!
- No
- Thank you for caring.
- The speed limit from Avon Road east towards Indianapolis needs to be raised to 40-45 mph starting at the BP gas station.
- Hendricks county should build another skatepark, the one in plainfield is small and meant for beginners, so there should be one for more advanced riders too. Or you could just make a really big one suited for both. Also i have read on the sign at plainfields skatepark that it is in phase 1, itd be cool to see another phase of the skatepark where they expand it and add more ramps.
- I would like to see the mountain biking trails at Washington Twp Park cleaned up and made wider.
- Vandalia Trail to expand bicycle trails to the new restaurants on 40 (BrewLink) and golf course
- Pittsboro needs more safe walkways and bicycle lanes to get around Pittsboro, especially on Wall Street and Jeff Gordon Blvd and 136. It would be great to have a safe path to bicycle to Brownsburg.
- Thank you! I am glad I live somewhere that appreciates parks!
- Much of what I learn about has happened. It is pictures of the event, rather than an announcement. I wish I knew where to get information earlier. I think outdoor swim pool lessons or classes would be wonderful.
- keep up the good work!
- None
- Moved to area 1 year ago. Never heard of McCloud. Will check it out.
- I would like to see Oktoberfest come back to Brownsburg.
- No
- I think it is very important to keep that "small town-close knit-family feel" of the community. Not to large or overpopulated. The parks, the Fall parade, and decorations at Christmas Time, Etc. For Plainfield downtown renovation, I believe they should open up live Theatre performing arts. Also, add different ,unique, affordable stores downtown to shop at. Such as: camping gear store, natural soap/lotion store, Art/canvas store, 80's clothing/retro old collectibles store, Etc. Is a great community:)
- We need adult only events and activities
- I love the walking trails! They are wonderful.
- No
- No
- My highest priority is the completion of the white lick creek trail From avon to plainfield.
- No, thanks.



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- love parks
- I visit certain parks frequently for the pickleball facilities.
- Plainfield and Brownsburg requires all neighborhoods to be connected to their trails. There is a massive hole between 2 excellent park systems. I see the main issues are finding a way to play catch-up to connect existing neighborhoods to are existing trails. I live in the 100s & 625E area near 2 excellent parks. But it is so dangerous to access them due bad traffic conditions, other then driving a short distance. Avon school bond referendum got pasted DaBug mid term fake the people technique. I'm sure you could do them same and finally bring Avon up to par with Plainfield and Brownsburg by connecting the existing trails. Thank You
- Moved from St. Louis area this year. Plainfield parks blow that out of the water. Love being able bicycle to all my favorite parks from my front door.
- I'm very disappointed with Town Hall Park maintenance. Trail still requires wading or mud after rain for about two years. Please replace appropriate manager!!!!
- Expanding the Vandalia trail is most important to my family. We LOVE the trail. And it is very well maintained.
- Doing a great job! Love the bike trails!!
- We've just recently moved here so we're not sure what all is available but we will be checking out the parks, etc.
- Plainfield has enough parks, continue to make each one better.
- Quit wasting our tax money! It is unbelievable the waste in these projects! It is not your job to take tax payer money to waste on a few projects used by maybe .0010 of the population of the county! It's mind boggling that we have bridges crumbling, and streets with inappropriate shoulders, poor road drainage and pot holes everywhere but you have tons of money to consistently waste on stupid useless projects! As a tax payer I am appalled but the waste and constant misappropriation! We are voting with your constant waste in mind. Unbelievable the waste!
- Please keep Plainfield's corridor plan from US70 out of Hendricks county. We feel this will take away the charm of the small town feel we have grown to love. Thanks!
- The numbers that I chose for the items kept disappearing.
- I am glad sidewalks are being added to gain access to trails and parks. Would LOVE a sidewalk on the south side of US36 to connect from the intermediate schools to the baseball fields that come before the Washington Township park. (There is now a walkway that crosses from the Avon Town Park to those behind baseball fields that then take you the the larger park.)
- Would like some sort of water park/community pool in Avon!
- My house backs up to a large field that is currently zoned for wetlands. We have spotted eagles an endangered species and we would like to protect all the wildlife that we we see. We would hate for something to go on that field
- I love living in Hendricks County where there is a focus on parks and rec. Thank you!
- You all have been doing an outstanding job!
- I love the new parks - I would love to see White Lick Creek Trail connect to the B&O. More bike trails!!!
- #1 Continue improving Washington Township Park and the trails and add more Covered Picnic areas
- Connecting bike trails Amo to Plainfield to Brownsburg is most important to me. Keep up the great work and thank you!
- Please work on connecting the B&O trail so we have access in Danville! Thank you!



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- No.
- Cardinal Park: Sometimes an undeveloped field has its own merits.
- I love the B&O trail!
- Mountain biking is lacking in hendricks county
- There are really great parks in HC. A very important part in quality of life here. Please keep some of it 'wild' though. We need undeveloped areas with maybe just trails.
- Eagle Creek is my favorite park, then Arbuckle Park in Brownsburg, then Hummel Park in Plainfield, then Washington Township Park in Avon, then Friendship Park in Plainfield. Thank you for all you do. The parks are always well kept and beautiful. I enjoy them all so much! I love McCloud too. It's just kind of far for me.
- I live on the trail for Hummel Park and walk daily 3.5 miles weather permitting.
- Thanks for the opportunity to comment. We greatly enjoy the outdoor experience in IN parks.. especially trails, scenic areas, wildlife and educational opportunities re the area, geology, etc. Periodic authentic local crafts and foods (e.g. honey, maple syrup) are very welcome and enjoyable. Continuing education opportunities such as astrology and wildlife are great to sustain and cultivate the connection with the outdoors. Technology is drawing/capturing people indoors... disconnecting from the wonder, beauty and adventure of nature. All the best, Doug & Mary.
- I feel as a resident of the county, we should not have to rent a shelter house.
- My family and I love the parks in Hendricks County. If I had one suggestion, its that the Parks increase the amount of dog waste bins as well as areas for dogs to run (as long as proper safety measures are in place).
- We really enjoy Washington Township Parks splash pad and trails.
- I'd love to see a YMCA Type Offering, or big splashpad like Plainfield in Brownsburg!
- The Parks Dept. is doing a very good job
- trail cameras would be a great addition for security purposes
- Only as previously mentioned here and in an earlier survey - Bridgewater area needs a SAFE ACCESS to the trails by bike and walking PLEASE. It is what limits me from going and further supporting the great existing trail system. Take care of what you have and make access BETTER before you add more that is not safe to access by bike and or by hiking.
- I am really worried about the design of your ranking system. Most lists put #1 as the most important. Even though your written directions were clear, how will you know that you got reliable results? Also, we got to this site with our 6 digit code using your article in the Republican. Thank you for providing the direct Survey Monkey site.
- The HCP department is top notch in my opinion. They truly care for the community and are striving to make the parks they have into same caliber or better as state run parks. Look forward to the development of Gibbs Park and ability to have family and large group events on site in future. Can't wait to see them acquire more properties in the future all around Hendricks County to serve all in the community. This green space will only improve resident quality of life as well improve the assessed value of property of surrounding areas, and not to forget the positive financial impact for the county and towns with the parks use. only wide.
- There needs to be adult only activities, kid free zones, more senior citizen involvement in the nursing homes to bring them to the parks.



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- The playground slide area at Town Hall Park near the big pavilion in Avon is very dangerous. The part where the children climb up the ladder to get to the top level for the highest slides doesn't allow the child to exit from off the ladder. They have to have long enough legs and strong enough arms to pull themselves up over the side. I've seen at least three children fall from that top 3rd level area hitting their heads on the second level. I hope a safety change can be made. Thanks!
- This
- I think Hendricks County does a wonderful job of maintaining their parks, recreation areas and splash pad, my husband and I along with our grandchildren love the parks, trails, creeks and ponds
- thanks for asking
- We enjoy the solitude of walking trails in wooded areas, which also provides ecological support for animals that might be displaced by commercializing parks in excess.
- I was disappointed to see all the spraying and killing of foliage at Hummel Park along the trails and so close to the lakes and waterways. We don't see As many crawfish (crawdads) anymore.
- add more areas for dogs like dog parks
- Disc golf is a rapidly growing sport. It makes good use of any kind of terrain, is easy to maintain the course, and is a big attraction for parks (just go to Avon Town Hall Park on a weekend to see how many people are out playing). I would love to see more disc golf courses in Hendricks County.
- No
- More involvement in the area surrounding Brownsburg.
- Nothing except to keep up the good work.
- No
- Keep up the great work!
- We use the recreation trails almost daily and would love to see additions and improvements to the existing system
- Parks and Recreation are not the proper business of government.
- Good job. Love the parks.
- In the last 10 years I've never seen so many people at Avon Town Hall Park. I go weekly & love seeing so many enjoy the disc golf, paved paths, shelter, play grounds, etc. It truly brings the community together. The workers at the park do a wonderful job of keeping the grounds & bathrooms clean & beautiful. We appreciate the hard work! It's rare I ever see the smallest piece of trash. We have 3 dogs & LOVE the very well located doggie bag disposal stations!!!
- No
- I appreciate how clean and safe our parks are and I hope that remains a priority.
- There are those that need scooter access to bathrooms to go to parks with their family
- I so appreciate the work your people do. They are very courteous and keep the trails so clean and care for. I love that soon other communities will connect. I live in Clayton area and have always so hoped the plainfield trail would connect closer to my home. We will always want to live in an area that connects to the trails. I currently use the Plainfield Vandalia trail and I feel safe and Enjoy every visit I make.
- No
- Please keep the needs of seniors in mind!
- I would find value in having access to the results of the survey before any actions are taken.



Appendix B: What We Learned from the Survey Process

- The postcard mailings were ineffective. Response rate after the first two mailings was abysmal. It actually would have been more cost-effective to mail the paper surveys out first and then send two rounds of postcard reminders.
- Sycamore Printing & Business Solutions in Danville did a great job on our mailings and paper surveys. Definitely worth using them next time, too.
- Total for postcards, paper survey mailings, pre-paid return envelopes, and postage for all of the mailings totaled about \$10,000 for budgeting purposes.
- Two survey questions asked people to rank items by importance on a scale of 1 to 10, and we received responses using check marks, ranking 1 as the most important and 10 as the least important (the exact opposite of the instructions), or ranking each answer individually from 1 to 10 (so there were multiple 8s or 5s or 3s, etc.), and some respondents skipped over the questions completely. All of this inconsistency in how the questions were answered resulted in invalid results for both questions. Don't use a ranking system like that again. Find a better way to ask for that kind of feedback.
- A short URL created with shorturl.com failed. Use the custom survey URL provided by Survey Monkey, instead.
- We started the surveying process in late August and ended it on October 31. That seemed to work well.
- The public input meeting was held in the morning on a workday due to concerns about a large turnout and COVID-19 (social distancing). COVID-19 spiked in the final quarter of 2020, forcing us to use extreme caution with public gatherings. Under normal circumstances, an evening meeting and/or a weekend meeting would be preferred for better attendance. The day after the public input meeting was held, Hendricks County's COVID level worsened from orange to red.
- Holding the public meetings in November would be preferable to early December. Early December is cutting it a little close to the January 15 due date for the rough draft of the CMP.
- Hold a staff meeting early in the CMP process to get better feedback.



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2021-25 CMP Timeline		
What	When	Notes
Started reviewing past CMPs and costs. Printed off DNR's rules and instructions. Assessed ability to create the CMP in-house, rather than hiring a firm to create one.	January, 2020	2001-2005: ~\$10,000 2006-2010: \$15,000 2011-2015: \$66,000 2016-2020: \$29,000 (for an update of the 2011-15 plan, not a full-blown new plan) 2021-2025: ~\$10,000 in printing and postage costs
Park Board approved the in-house creation of the CMP and formed a CMP committee.	February 5, 2020	CMP committee: Bill DuMond, Brad Eisenhart, Paul Miner, Ryan Lemley, Eric Ivie
Started researching other CMPs from the area and reading surveying methods textbook	February, 2020	
CMP committee met and designed the survey questions	April 9, 2020	FYI: COVID-19 pandemic hit in early March of 2020.
Began researching and writing about the Park Board, department, budget, demographic info, natural features, man-made features, etc. for the CMP	April, 2020	The 2026-30 CMP should only require some relatively minor edits to these sections, which should save A LOT of time.
Created the online survey on SurveyMonkey and a paper version of the survey.	May, 2020	
Contacted Sycamore Printing & Business Solutions about printing and mailing our survey postcards. Arranged to purchase a mailing list of every 23 rd residence in Hendricks County (no names; just addresses) through them.	May 27, 2020	Sycamore did a fantastic job and were excellent to work with. All printing and mailing costs totaled ~\$10,000 for budgeting purposes.
Full Park Board workshop on the CMP	July 16, 2020	Worked on goals, priorities, schedule, etc.
Sycamore finished designing survey postcards	August 19, 2020	
First round of postcards went out	August 26, 2020	
Second round of postcards went out	September 10, 2020	
Third mailing went out	September 28, 2020	
Survey closed	October 31, 2020	
Public input meeting held	December 7, 2020	Try doing this in mid-November next time.
Park Board reviewed CMP	December, 2020	
Park Board approved submittal of first draft to Indiana DNR	January 6, 2021	
First submission of CMP sent to Indiana DNR	January 7, 2021	DNR deadline is January 15, 2021.
Completed Plan Review Checklist received from Indiana DNR	January 21, 2021	
Final public presentation held	March 1, 2021	
Second submission of CMP sent to Indiana DNR	April 9, 2021	DNR deadline is April 15, 2021.
Indiana DNR approval of CMP	April 19, 2021	
Park Board adoption of CMP	May 5, 2021	
Two signature pages signed by Park Board president and secretary	May 5, 2021	
Signature pages sent to Indiana DNR	May 6, 2021	



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

Appendix C: Media Coverage

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The Republican

Volume 139, Number 36 Thursday, September 3, 2020 Published Weekly in Danville, Indiana 50¢

Parks Survey

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation is looking for public input on the direction county parks should take in the next five years as the Park Board puts together its Comprehensive Master Plan.

Public Input An Important Part of Parks Master Plan

HCP&R is required to submit a Comprehensive Master Plan every five years to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, outlining the direction that the department intends to take in the coming years. Their current plan expires at the end of 2020.

An important part of the Comprehensive Master Plan is getting input from the members of the community that HCP&R serves. HCP&R is required to collect feedback from randomly selected residents of Hendricks County, as well as from a non-random sample of residents.

For the random sample, more than 2,500 Hendricks County residential addresses were randomly chosen and postcards mailed to those homes with a link to the online survey and a unique survey code.


"Unfortunately, we've had a problem with the link, and it doesn't appear to be properly taking respondents to the survey site," said HCP&R Assistant Superintendent Erie Ivie, who is spearheading the creation of the new Comprehensive Master Plan. "We apologize for the inconvenience. It's frustrating to have tested the link several times, only to have it fail after the postcards were sent out."

Ivie said that people who received the postcards but cannot get the link to work can instead access the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/hcparkstec> or through HCP&R's website at <https://www.HendricksCountyParks.org>. Additionally, a link to the survey site can be found on the department's Facebook page.

The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete online.

Those who wish to complete the survey but did not receive a postcard with a unique survey code can use their home zip code as their survey code and be a part of the non-random sample.

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation operates McCloud Nature Park outside of North Salem and the portion of the Vandalia Trail that runs from Arno through Coatesville to the Hendricks-Putnam County Line. They are also currently constructing W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park in Avon with the new park scheduled to open in 2021.



Public input in 2015 (top photo) helped Hendricks County Parks & Recreation incorporate those ideas into the plans for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park (bottom photo). The HCP&R's newest park is scheduled to open Phase 1 in the spring of 2021.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

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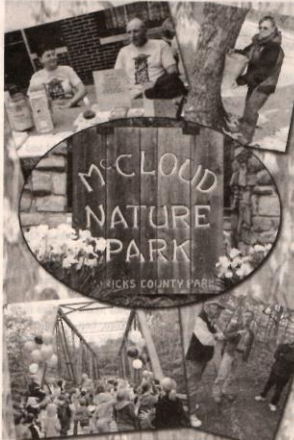
The Republican

Volume 139, Number 42 Thursday, October 15, 2020 Published Weekly in Danville, Indiana 50¢

Parks Survey

As part of its preparations for a Comprehensive Master Plan with goals for 2021-2025, Hendricks County Parks & Recreation has put together a survey to gather feedback from the citizens it serves.

Your Opinion Parks Wanted



Once the new Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) is approved by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), HCP&R will be eligible to apply for a number of grants through the DNR. The document will also be used as an overarching guide for the Park Board and staff as they continue to develop our existing parks and trails and look toward future expansion.

To access the online survey, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/t/heparks-rec>. Use your home zip code as your survey code. (If you have received a six-digit survey code in the mail from us, please use that code instead of your zip code.)

Paper surveys can also be picked up at the main office (955 E. Main Street in Danville) or at the McCloud Nature Center (8518 Hughes Road in North Salem) during normal business hours.

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation will be gathering survey results until October 31, 2020.

If you have any questions or need any assistance in completing the survey, please call the main office at (317) 718-6188 or email at heparks@heparks.net. The office is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

McCloud Nature Park was the first to be established by the Hendricks County Parks & Recreation Department. A survey is available to allow citizens to give their opinions on the future of this and other parks that will be established in the future.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

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The Republican

Volume 139, Number 49

Thursday, December 3, 2020

Published Weekly in Danville, Indiana 50¢

Parks Plan Seeks Input



Members of the Hendricks County Parks Board participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park last July.

As Hendricks County Parks & Recreation puts the finishing touches on its updated Comprehensive Master Plan, the department invites the public to participate in an in-person meeting to provide feedback on plans for the next five years. The public input meeting will be hosted on Monday, Dec. 7 from 9 to 11 a.m. in Hendricks County Government Center in Danville. Meeting rooms 4 and 5 will be utilized to allow for social distancing. Facial coverings are required inside the Government Center and at the meeting.

The department's Comprehensive Master Plan is submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) every five years, combining public input with a wide variety of additional information to create a plan of action for upcoming years. The updated plan encompasses 2021 through 2025.

Filing the Comprehensive Master Plan with the DNR also makes Hendricks County Parks & Recreation eligible to apply for grant money through the state agency.

The department recognizes that the day of the week and time of day of the public input meeting is not ideal, but given the current COVID-19 pandemic conditions, restricting the size of a social gathering and making sure there is room to socially distance is paramount.

"Under normal circumstances, we'd hold a meeting during an evening or on a weekend to maximize the opportunity for public participation," said Eric Ivie, assistant superintendent of Hendricks County Parks & Recreation. "These, of course, are anything but normal circumstances."

Ivie noted that Hendricks County and all of its bordering counties are currently at orange level, as defined by Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb. The state's recommendations for orange-level counties include restricting the size of social gatherings.

"We considered not holding a public meeting at all because of the pandemic," said Ivie. "Ultimately, though, we think that this is a reasonable compromise that balances public health and safety and the opportunity for public feedback."

Ivie encouraged people who cannot attend or who are uncomfortable attending the meeting to contact the department at hcparks@hcparks.net or at (317) 718-6188 to request a survey that they can complete to provide their input.

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation operates McCloud Nature Park outside of North Salem and the portion of the Vandalia Trail that runs from Amo through Couts-ville to the Hendricks-Putnam County Line.

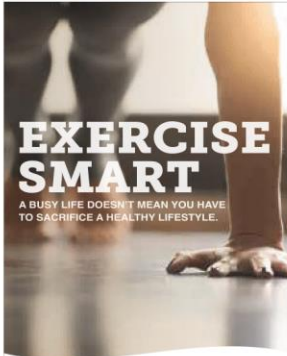
They are also currently constructing W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park in Avon with the new park scheduled to open in 2021.



5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

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Hendricks County park system updates 5-year plan, includes a new park and developments

By Gus Pearcy

The opening of a new park and expanding two existing properties are on tap for the next five years at the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department. The department, which runs McCloud Nature Park, the far western portion of the Vandalia Trail and a new park between Avon and Plainfield, is redefining the Comprehensive Master Plan for 2021-2025. The plan is necessary to apply for state and federal funding or grants.

Opening and continued development of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park sits atop the list. The park is the department's latest property in the southwest corner of Avon. Assistant superintendent Eric Ivie said plans include opening the park next year.

The park is on Gibbs Road between county roads 200 S and 350 S and has been on the parks department's plans since 2010. The addition will be important for many reasons.

"For us to have a park that is centrally-located, both geographically and in relation to the population of Hendricks County, I think, is going to be real important for us," Ivie said. "It's also going to allow us to offer

more recreation type activities. There are going to be a lot of features of the park that we're not quite ready to release to the public, but they're going to be pretty darn neat."

Gibbs park will be more focused on recreation with plans for the department's first playground.

Plans also include expanding the Vandalia Trail between Amo and Clayton. Ivie said the ultimate goal is to stretch the trail across the entire county as part of the National Road Heritage Trail. The former path of the interurban tracks is deemed a visionary trail by the State of Indiana.

"The vision is that it will be a trail that runs nonstop from Terre Haute all the way to Richmond," Ivie said. "Our goal now is to expand eastward from Amo, eventually through Clayton and Cartersburg, and connect to Plainfield's portion of the Vandalia Trail, and their portion runs all the way to the Hendricks-Marion County line."

If that happens, Hendricks County will be one of the first counties to get that accomplished in Indiana, Ivie said, adding that land between Amo and Clayton has been purchased but more acquisition is needed.

McCloud, the system's first and best-known park, will see some improvements, too. The plan calls for renovating a cottage on the property and investigating purchasing more land for the passive park.

A recent survey of 2,500 county residents helped open the department's eyes, Ivie said. The rate of response ran 22%, which means the confidence level — compared to sampling every resident — was better than 91%. The response was supportive from the people who had gone to one of the parks, Ivie said.

"The No. 1 attraction at McCloud is the trails," he said. "People are attracted to things that are at the park."

People want to go to the parks on their own time and schedule and explore, rather than going for a specific event, he said.

"We did set single-month attendance records in April and May," he added. "When everybody was coming out of the initial quarantine, they went to the parks. It was a great place to go and get some space, still get some fresh air and get out of the house."

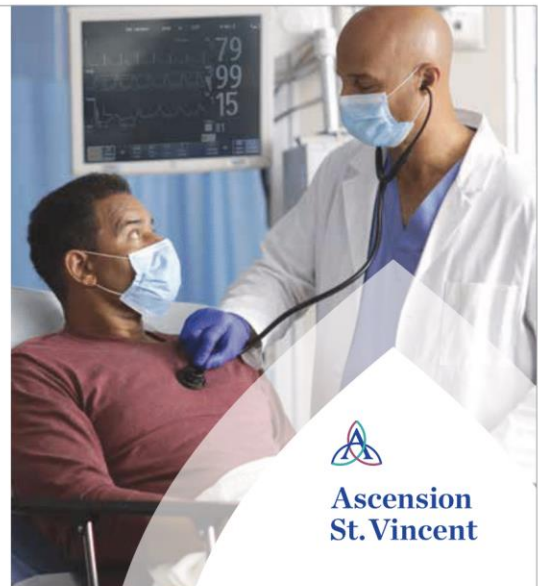
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5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan, 2021-2025

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The Republican

Volume 140, Number 8 Thursday, February 25, 2021 Published Weekly in Danville, Indiana 50¢

HCP&R Plan

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation (HCP&R) invites the public to participate in an in-person presentation of its Comprehensive Master Plan that outlines its plans of action for 2021 through 2025. The public meeting will be hosted on Monday, March 1 from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Hendricks County Government Center in Danville. Meeting rooms 4 and 5 will be utilized to allow for social distancing. Facial coverings are required inside the Government Center and at the meeting.

Another Park in the Planning



Hendricks County Naturalist Sarah Wolf greeted guests at the groundbreaking ceremony for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park last year.

"We'll give a very quick and broad overview of the plan and then answer any questions that anyone has," said Eric Ivie, assistant superintendent with HCP&R. "Public feedback is very important to us, since we serve the public."

Ivie wrote the document, and he will be spearheading the presentation along with superintendent Ryan Lemley.

The department's Comprehensive Master Plan is submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) every five years, combining public input with a wide variety of additional information to create a plan of action for upcoming years.

Filing the Comprehensive Master Plan with the DNR also makes Hendricks County Parks & Recreation eligible to apply for grant money through the state agency.

HCP&R submitted a draft of the plan to the DNR in January, received some constructive guidance from the state agency, made some minor edits to the document, as is now ready to present it to the public before submitting the final draft back to the DNR in April.

The department's Comprehensive Master Plan can be found on its website at www.HendricksCountyParks.org. There will also be a QR code at the public meeting that can be scanned to access the document. Given the document's length and the cost and resources required to print it, no paper copies will be available at the public meeting.

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation operates McCloud Nature Park outside of North Salem and the portion of the Vandalia Trail that runs from Amo through Coatesville to the Hendricks-Putnam County Line. They are also currently constructing W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park in Avon with the new park scheduled to open this summer.