Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 2, 2026
2:00 p.m.

4481 Gibbs Road
Danville, IN 46122

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:59 p.m.

Board Present: Mike Hayden, Vice President
Gary Emsweller
Paul Miner
Jeff Pell

Board Absent: Brad Eisenhart, President
Matt Freije, Secretary
Vicky Byarley

Staff Present: Ryan Lemley, Superintendent
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent
Patty Seymour, Administrative Assistant

Guests: None

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Adopt Agenda

Miner moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Emsweller, the motion passed unanimously.

A-2. Approval of Minutes of August 5, 2026, Park Board Meeting

Approval of the previous meeting minutes was tabled due to an insufficient quorum of Board members who had been present at that meeting.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

No public comments were presented

It was noted that Byarley, who was traveling and unable to attend, had communicated prior to the meeting that she supported the proposed shelter at McCloud Nature Park honoring David A. Rodgers.

C. CONTINUED BUSINESS

C-1. E-Bike & E-Scooter Policy Adoption

Lemley presented the proposed department-wide e-bike and e-scooter policy following the Board's previous discussion and review of policies that are currently being utilized by other local park departments. The proposed policy provides:

- Vandalia Trail: E-bike and e-scooter use will follow applicable state law
- McCloud Nature Park: E-bikes and e-scooters are prohibited
- W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park: Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes are permitted on trails, with a maximum speed of 15 mph. Class 3 e-bikes are prohibited.

Staff explained that adoption of the written policy would provide clear direction for enforcement and allow the policy to be formally posted for public reference. **Miner moved to adopt the e-bike and e-scooter policy as presented; seconded by Emsweller, the motion passed unanimously.**

C-2. Proposal for David A. Rodgers Trust Donation

Staff discussed the David A. Rodgers Trust donation benefiting McCloud Nature Park. Approximately $37,000 has been received to date with an additional amount of approximately $37,000 anticipated through the probate process. Staff proposed using the funds toward construction of a new large pavilion at McCloud Nature Park as a lasting legacy to David A. Rodgers and naming the structure the David A. Rodgers Pavilion. The proposed pavilion would potentially be located at or near the former Mill Cottage site and could accommodate approximately 100 people. The facility could serve naturalist programming, park visitors, and pavilion reservations. Preliminary pricing for a larger shelter kit was approximately $61,600, exclusive of site development, electrical service, furnishings, grills, and other construction costs. Because the trust funds are not being administered through the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC), the project will require going through the competitive bidding process.

Staff reported that the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had preliminarily reviewed the proposal due to previous Land and Water Conservation Fund requirements and was supportive of the project.

The Board discussed pavilion size, roofing materials, appearance, long-term maintenance, and incorporating design elements compatible with the natural and rustic character of McCloud Nature Park. Staff were directed to explore options including asphalt shingles and a limestone or similar façade around the structural columns.

By consensus, the Board approved staff to proceed with development of specifications, quotes, and a bid package for the proposed pavilion. The Board also provided consensus in support of naming the facility the David A. Rodgers Pavilion.

D. PROPERTY UPDATES

D-1. McCloud Nature Park

Harlos Property – Proposed Vault Privy

Lemley presented a preliminary concept for installation of an ADA-accessible vault privy on the Harlos property north of Big Walnut Creek. The proposed facility could provide restroom access for visitors utilizing the expanded trail system and could also provide limited shelter during inclement weather. Preliminary estimates for the structure range from approximately $46,000 - $60,000, with total project costs potentially approaching $100,000 after engineering and development.

Approximately $550,000 remains available through the Harlos fund, held by the Hendricks County Community Foundation. Staff advised that state review and septic engineering may be required despite the facility utilizing a vault rather than a conventional septic system. The Board discussed aesthetics, maintenance requirements, ventilation and odor control, accessibility for pumping/service vehicles, and the advantages of a lower-maintenance exterior. The Board was generally supportive of continuing to investigate the project. Staff will:

- Research similar facilities currently in use at Indiana State Parks;
- Obtain updated pricing;
- Discuss potential funding with the Hendricks County Community Foundation; and
- Provide an update at a future meeting.

Mill Cottage Demolition
Mill Cottage was demolished during the previous month. JBS Environmental completed asbestos tile abatement associated with the demolition. The original project cost was approximately $24,600 with asbestos abatement adding approximately $2,000.

Robert Wood Environmental Grant
The naturalist staff plan to submit a grant application of approximately $9,250 through the Robert Wood Environmental Grant cycle. The proposed project would focus on updating aging taxidermy and educational displays within the Nature Center. The Board discussed the educational value of proposed specimens and encouraged staff to prioritize wildlife relevant to the park and local area.

McCloud Trail Brochures and Prairie Maze
Updated McCloud Nature Park trail brochures have been completed and posted, incorporating the new Raccoon Ravine and Turtle Cove trails. Staff also reported completion of a bald eagle-themed design for the prairie maze in celebration of the Nation's 250th birthday.

Storm and Trail Conditions
McCloud experienced minimal damage from recent heavy rains. Big Walnut Creek generally remained within its banks, and no significant damage was reported at the park.

Electrical Improvements
Staff are working on minor electrical issues at McCloud and recently began installation of a new electrical breaker box.

Wetland/Boardwalk Evaluation
Staff discussed the existing wetland boardwalk area, noting that the site currently holds very little water except during significant flooding events. Staff have begun investigating whether the area can be enhanced to function more effectively as a wetland and improve the visitor experience. A wetland delineation/feasibility evaluation is anticipated to cost approximately $5,000. Staff will continue investigating the feasibility of improvements and potentially incorporate the project into future Nature Park master planning and capital improvements.

McCloud Fuel Tank
Staff reported that the existing single-wall fuel tank at McCloud has been flagged for replacement due to secondary containment concerns and its deteriorating condition. A replacement 300-gallon double-wall tank is being investigated at an estimated cost in the range of $4,000. Additional information regarding pricing and annual fuel usage will be reviewed before proceeding.

As of August 27th, TRAFx counters documented 1,644 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

D-2. Vandalia Trail

Eastern Expansion – Phase 2

Staff reported continued progress on Eastern Expansion Phase 2, including coordination with Fishbeck on permits, the construction packet, a small parking area, and procurement planning for a flat rail-car bridge. The anticipated schedule is to present a bid packet to the Board in the November meeting, followed by bid opening approximately one month later, with construction targeted to begin in spring of 2027.

Amo Park Board Coordination

Staff met onsite with the Amo Park Board on August 12th to discuss park improvements, electrical connections, shelter plans, and future trail expansion. The Town of Amo is working on sidewalks and signage to improve connections to the trail and have discussed potentially constructing a small section of asphalt trail near the existing equestrian parking area.

Trail Maintenance

Staff recognized employees who responded outside normal working hours to remove large trees and limbs that had fallen across the trail following recent weather events.

Coatesville Restroom Vandalism

Staff reported continued vandalism at the Coatesville trailhead restroom facility. The recent damage has been repaired, and the Coatesville Police Department has been notified. The Board discussed possible security measures and monitoring options. Staff will review available outdoor security camera technology that could assist with identifying individuals while maintaining appropriate privacy within restroom areas.

As of June 25th, TRAFx counters documented 1,959 individuals using the trail this month.

D-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Septic System

Staff continue to await the required permit for the septic system project for the future Welcome Center/Administrative Office. The department and contractor are prepared to proceed once the permit is received. Staff have also coordinated with the Hendricks County Health Department to help facilitate review once necessary state approvals are received.

Park Safety

Staff discussed a previous report concerning interaction involving an individual at the park. Information and photographs were provided to law enforcement. No additional incidents involving the individual have been observed since that time.

Public Water System

An initial public water system sample failed testing requirements; however, a subsequent sample was submitted and returned satisfactory results.

Park Maintenance

Staff complimented the maintenance crew on the condition of the park. Gabion-style erosion control baskets were constructed using hog panels and professional-grade connectors after commercially

manufactured baskets could not be obtained. Staff reported that the installation appears to be functioning effectively.

As of August 27th, TRAFx counters recorded 6,087 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

E. REPORTS

E-1. Superintendent Report

B&O Trail

Lemley reported discussion with B&O Trail representatives concerning potential future maintenance responsibilities if the trail is expanded near McCloud Nature Park. Staff indicated that any proposal should be presented to the Park Board and incorporated into the department's Comprehensive Master Plan. Maintenance responsibilities would also need to be evaluated based on staffing, equipment, and proximity to existing park operations.

State Board of Accounts / Contract Documentation

Staff discussed communication with the Auditor's Office regarding documentation of Park Board-approved contracts exceeding $25,000. To improve recordkeeping and communication, documentation regarding future large contracts will be forwarded directly to the Auditor's Office following Board action.

Department Merchandise

Staff investigated the possibility of selling limited department merchandise at the McCloud Nature Center. Due to sales tax, administrative, and accounting requirements, staff recommended not pursuing merchandise sales at this time. A future partnership with the PFOHC may be considered.

Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC)

The department recently hosted the PFOHC Board of Directors, with all 15 members attending. Staff provided updates regarding department projects, including the proposed Welcome Center and Administrative Office.

The Foundation also plans to hold its annual Picnic in the Park fundraising event next year at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds (March 5th). Additional information will be provided to the Board when available.

Pancake Breakfast

Naturalist staff requested guidance regarding whether the annual pancake breakfast should be held for one weekend or two weekends next year. Discussion generally favored one weekend, with the matter to be revisited when more Board members are present.

Equipment

Lemley reported continued mechanical issues with several pieces of department equipment, including the Bobcat skid steer, John Deere tractor, and Kubota UTVs. The Bobcat is currently operational but is expected to be traded after the new budget becomes available and replacement equipment can be purchased.

Other Business

Master Naturalist Program: A question was raised regarding future Indiana Master Naturalist classes. Staff will check with the naturalist team regarding upcoming opportunities.

Silo Mural: The Board discussed the potential future mural on the silo at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Staff contacted tourism representatives at Visit Hendricks County regarding the project. The Board reiterated its desire to have significant input regarding the mural design. Additionally, the mature tree located near the silo is not anticipated to be removed, although appropriate trimming may eventually be necessary.

E-2. Budget Report

Ivie reported that overall department expenditures remain within budget.

One maintenance account has approximately $145 remaining due largely to machinery repair expenses throughout the year. Other accounts available can be utilized for remaining maintenance expenses.

One of the naturalist's accounts also has approximately $150 remaining. Ivie indicated other appropriate funding sources are available if additional expenditures are necessary.

No significant overall budget concerns were reported.

E-3. Media Report

Ivie reported a strong month for department social media.

- Instagram received nearly 5,000 views.
- Facebook received more than 80,000 views.
- Website traffic remained consistent with typical summer usage.

McCloud Nature Park continues to be the department's most frequently visited property page, followed generally by Vandalia Trail and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

Ivie complimented the naturalist team for increased social media activity.

ADJOURNMENT

With no additional business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Gibbs Homestead located at 4481 Gibbs Road, Danville, IN 46122.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mike Hayden, Vice President