

2014 - 2018

# LAKE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



FINAL PLAN  
April 2014

50<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
1968 - 2018

This publication has been prepared by the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department. For clarification or additional information, please contact the following:

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Prepared By:



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Prepared August 2013 - April 2014

2014 - 2018

# **LAKE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**



## IDNR Acceptance Letter



Michael R. Pence, Governor  
Cameron F. Clark, Director

Division of Outdoor Recreation  
402 W. Washington Street W271  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2782  
317-232-4070 Fax: 317-233-4648  
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James W. Tonkovich  
Park Board President  
Lake County Park and Recreation Board  
8411 East Lincoln Highway  
Crown Point, IN 46307

January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Dear Mr. Tonkovich,

The DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation planning staff has reviewed the final draft of the 2015-2019 Lake 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 now eligible to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants through this office. A new plan will be due on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 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](mailto:bbronson@dnr.IN.gov).

We support your planning efforts and encourage your participation in the grant programs administered by the Division of Outdoor Recreation. 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](mailto:gbeilfuss@dnr.IN.gov).

Sincerely,

Greg Beilfuss  
State and Community Outdoor Recreation Planner  
IDNR Division of Outdoor Recreation

ECC – Rachel Christenson; Craig Zandstra



# Resolution Adopting Plan

## Resolution 2014-08

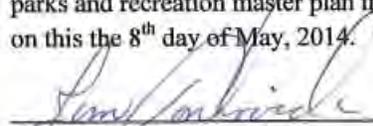
Whereas, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board is desirous of providing a quality parks and recreation system for the citizens of Lake County, Indiana; and

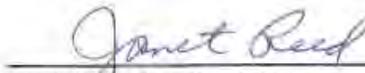
Whereas, in doing so, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board recognizes the importance of sound planning; and

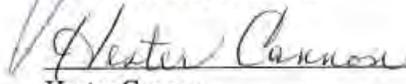
Whereas, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board has sought opinions and input from citizens of Lake County in developing a five-year parks and recreation master plan; and

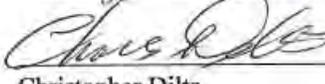
Whereas, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board desires to make itself eligible to meet certain requirements for participation in grant programs.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board hereby accepts and adopts the 2014-2018 Lake County Parks and Recreation Master Plan as its official five-year parks and recreation master plan in accordance with guidelines set forth by the State of Indiana, on this the 8<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2014.

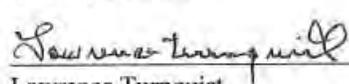
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Tonkovich, President

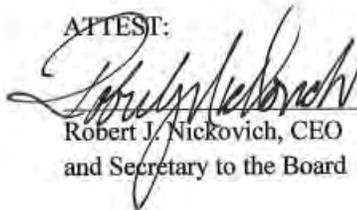
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Janet Reed, Vice President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hester Cannon

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Dilts

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
George Kolettis

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lawrence Turnquist

ATTEST:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert J. Nickovich, CEO  
and Secretary to the Board

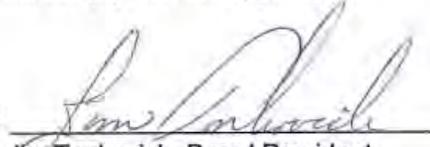


## Assurance of Compliance

**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)**

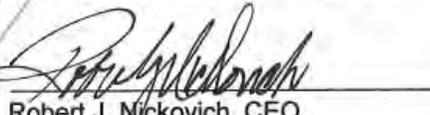
The Lake County Parks and Recreation Board (Applicant) has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

SIGNATURE



Jim Tonkovich, Board President

SIGNATURE



Robert J. Nickovich, CEO  
and Secretary to the Board

DATE:

May 8, 2014



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# CHAPTER 1

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The 2014-2018 Lake County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an update of the 2008 master plan. This plan, prepared by the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department and submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation (IDNR, DOR) in April of 2014, provides a guide to continued programs and services for residents of and visitors to Lake County over the next five years.

Information contained herein will aid decisions regarding opportunities to acquire, reclaim, and preserve significant natural systems and open space resources, and to expand its recreational, cultural, historical, and educational programs.

Today, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board continues its mission to create and responsibly manage a county-wide system of parks and open space resources, and to provide recreational, cultural, and educational programs based on these resources for the use and enjoyment of Lake County residents and visitors.

### Definition of Planning Area

Located along the south shore of Lake Michigan approximately 15 miles from the Chicago Loop, Lake County offers its residents the conveniences and amenities that come with having access to one of the largest major metropolitan areas in the country. Direct access to Interstates 65, 80, 90, and 94, as well as six major U.S. highways, and both freight and passenger rail lines, provide the basis for a transportation system that serves the County.

The planning area for this master plan update is defined as the boundary of Lake County, though programs and partnerships with agencies outside Lake County do occur. Lake County is approximately 497 square miles in size. Crown Point, the County seat, is located near the center of the County. There are seven incorporated cities and twelve incorporated towns in Lake County, with nearly 92 percent of the County population living within the boundaries of those communities. These nineteen communities each offer unique experiences and lifestyles, from the



*Lake County is located in northwest Indiana, 15 miles from the Chicago Loop and 145 miles from Indianapolis.*

historic industrial urban communities located along the shore of Lake Michigan, to the rural communities that still characterize the south county area. According to the 2010 US Census, 496,005 people live within the planning area.

## History of the Lake County Parks and Recreation System

The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department will mark its 50th year in 2018. Throughout its long history, the Park Board has been dedicated to providing a county-wide system of parks and trails that offer recreational, educational, historical, and cultural opportunities and access to open space and natural areas. The Lake County Park Board, created in 1968, made its first land purchases later that year and established the first county park in 1972 at Lemon Lake. Stoney Run County Park was dedicated the following year. Hence began a long and storied history. The following timeline provides a general accounting of the Lake County Parks and Recreation System:



*Stoney Run County Park was officially dedicated to the Lake County Parks and Recreation System in 1973.*

- 1968** Lake County Parks and Recreation Board established on June 1st.  
  
First Park Board meeting was held on June 11th.  
  
Purchase of first county park land: Lemon Lake (160 acres) and Deep River (69 acres).
- 1970** Received approval of the first Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to purchase 400 acres near Leroy, which later became Stoney Run County Park.  
  
The first survey of park and recreation needs was conducted by a 50-member advisory committee.
- 1971** The first “Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Open Space” was approved.
- 1972** Lemon Lake County Park dedicated. Acquisition of additional Stoney Run County Park land completed through LWCF Grant.

- 1973** Received grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, State of Indiana.  
  
Acquired an additional 45 acres at Lemon Lake County Park, 40 acres at Stoney Run County Park, and 34 acres at Deep River County Park.  
  
Stoney Run County Park officially dedicated.
- 1974** The first Vietnam War Memorial in Indiana is dedicated at Stoney Run County Park.  
  
Completed acquisition of Wood’s Mill at Deep River County Park and parcels along the Little Calumet park site were acquired for Lake Etta County Park.  
  
More than 8,000 trees were planted in the Department’s first nursery at Stoney Run County Park.  
  
The Recreation Division, in conjunction with the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), completed the first bikeways map.
- 1975** Department receives an “A” rating Accreditation Award from the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association.  
  
Legislation was passed allowing the Lake County Council representation on the Lake County Parks Board.  
  
The Department began investigation of 1,000 acre area along the Kankakee River as a potential wildlife area, which would later be called the Grand Kankakee Marsh.  
  
Two hundred fifty-six acres acquired for the Deep River County Park site as the Department’s first nature center opens.  
  
Twenty acres purchased and added to the Little Calumet River Recreational

Corridor, which is later called Lake Etta County Park.

- 1976** An arboretum at Lemon Lake County Park begins with a 40 tree donation and a Touchstone Trail for the handicapped is surfaced.

Wood's Mill at Deep River County Park is dedicated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) acquired 238 acres and options an additional 623 acres at the Grand Kankakee Marsh.

- 1977** The Department assumes management of Lake Etta County Park through an inter-local government agreement with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Mrs. Rose Buckley Pearce donates a 160-acre homestead near Lowell as a county park. This site would later become Buckley Homestead County Park.

Deep River County Park is dedicated.

Approval is gained authorizing the sale of \$3.4 million General Obligation Bond Issue for acquisition of 1,400 acres including Turkey Creek Golf Course and various park improvement projects.

The Department closes on 3.82 acres of Lake Michigan lakefront in the Hammond-Whiting area, which later becomes Whihala Beach County Park.

A LWCF Grant is received for land acquisition at the Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park.

The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department receives a LWCF grant and acquires 300 acres from TNC at the Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park and acquires remaining parcels (861 acres) through proceeds from a General Obligation Bond Issue.

- 1978** Turkey Creek County Park Golf Course is dedicated.

Dr. Joseph Jarabek donates 38.5 acres at Deep River County Park.

Urban and Community Forestry program was initiated through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

- 1979** Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park dedicated as the only county-managed fish and wildlife area in Indiana.

Creative play structure completed at Stoney Run County Park.

Ninety acres in the Griffith-Merrillville area is acquired, which will later become Oak Ridge Prairie County Park.

Implementation of the Urban Task Force which identified projects or future parks that could be used for urban revitalization. This included a botanical garden, marina on Lake Michigan, clean up of former industrialized sites.

The Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park is dedicated.

- 1980** The Touchstone Trail is dedicated at Lemon Lake County Park.

One hundred forty-seven acres added to Oak Ridge Prairie County Park; Four acres added to Hammond-Whiting Lakefront; 57 acres added to Deep River County Park. Grant awarded by the Indiana Department of Tourism and the Northwest Indiana Natural and Human Resources Foundation for promotion of Lake County Parks.

- 1981** Whihala Beach County Park and Gibson Woods Nature Preserve are dedicated and added to the park system.

LCPRD enters into inter-local government agreement with the Little



*Mrs. Rose Buckley Pearce donated 160 acres to Lake County Parks and Recreation in 1977. This later became Buckley Homestead County Park.*



*Gibson Woods Nature Preserve, dedicated in 1981, is home to Hawk Chicks like the one pictured.*

- Calumet River Basin Commission for the management of Lake Etta County Park.
- The Department receives accreditation as a first-class parks and recreation system from the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association (IPRA).
- 1982** The Department receives LWCF Grant for improvements at Lake Etta County Park and Lemon Lake County Park.
- The Department receives approval for \$5.5 million General Obligation bond issue for park development.
- The Park Board adopts a five-year parks and open space plan.
- 1983** Buckley Homestead County Park opens with weekend programs and weekday reserved tours.
- Oak Ridge Prairie County Park is dedicated. U.S. Senator Dan Quayle is in attendance.
- 1984** Gibson Woods Environmental Awareness Center opens at Gibson Woods County Park.
- Church building at Deep River County Park opens as a visitor's center and general store gift shop.
- LWCF Grant awarded for improvements at Lake Etta County Park.
- 1985** Whihala Beach County Park opened and dedicated; boat launch ramp provides access to Lake Michigan.
- Additional LWCF Grant awarded for improvements at Lake Etta County Park.
- 1986** A third LWCF Grant awarded for Lake Etta County Park improvements, including a swimming beach, handicap water ramp, improved fishing areas and additional parking.
- Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Committee completes Phase 1 of memorial restoration at Stoney Run County Park.
- 1987** LWCF Grant awarded at Deep River County Park for the acquisition of three acres and construction of a gazebo.
- More than 12,000 hours of volunteer services was given by the "Friends of the Parks."
- 1988** At Deep River County Park, two bridges over Deep River are installed, the gazebo is completed, and work on a 1837 sash frame sawmill is begun.
- Grant awarded by the Indiana Department of Commerce Tourism Bureau and the Lake Heritage Parks Foundation for the promotion of parks facilities and programs.
- Dove season initiated at the Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park.
- 1989** Lake County Commissioners establish the memorial at Stoney Run County Park as the official Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Lake County.
- 1990** Multipurpose building constructed at Lake Etta County Park.
- Lemon Lake County Park playground is renovated.
- LWCF Grant awarded for the development of Oak Ridge Prairie County Park.
- 1991** Phase 3 restoration of Vietnam Veteran's Memorial completed at Stoney Run County Park.
- Indiana Waters Grant received to construct a public access site on the Kankakee River at the Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park. Special design features include a floating finger pier that "rides" with the 12' high and low

levels of the river.

**1992** Waterfowl USA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Wildlife Program assist LCPRD in developing the 120 acre Little Hickory Unit at the Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park. Ducks Unlimited proposes to redesign the hog marsh as a 270 acre Moist Soil Management Unit and finance the project via local Life Sponsors. The project is expanded by 100 acres and constructed for less than the original estimate of \$150,000.

**1993** A \$25 million General Obligation bond issue passes enabling the department to acquire 600 acres and develop numerous park improvements.

An additional 320 acres are received to expand Buckley Homestead County Park from the estate of Mrs. Rose Buckley Pearce.

**1994** The Indiana Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project (IGKMRP) becomes the State's first successful North America Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Partnership and receives \$1,500,000 to begin the ten-year goal of acquiring, restoring, and enhancing 26,500 acres within the eight-county Kankakee River Basin in Northwest Indiana.

**1995** Deep River Waterpark opens.

The 260 acre Hog Marsh at Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park is dedicated.

The 888 acre Goose Lake Unit is acquired at Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park with the assistance of IDNR, Indiana Heritage Trust, and NAWCA.

**1996** Buckley Homestead Museum and Farmhouse is opened to the public.

Whihala Beach opened west beach area and fishing pier.

IGKMRP receives a Phase II NAWCA Grant of \$1,000,000 for Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park.

Ducks Unlimited develops plans for a 520-acre Moist Soil Unit at Goose Lake at Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park.

The Storm, a dark three ride slide complex, was added to Deep River Waterpark.

**1997** The Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission, the US Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District, and the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department holds groundbreaking ceremony for Lake Etta recreation enhancements.

**1998** Groundbreaking for Three Rivers County Park.

The Erie Lackawanna Trail opens.

Construction begins at Goose Lake at Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park after 18-month permit process is concluded.

Mrs. Rose Buckley Pearce donates an additional 84 acres for Buckley Homestead County Park.

**1999** Three Rivers County Park opens.

Dedication of the new Vietnam Veteran's Memorial at Stoney Run.

A large group pavilion, canoe launch, trail, and multi-level playground added to Lake Etta County Park.

Eighteen hole disc golf course opened at Lemon Lake County Park.

"The Dragon" speed slide is added at Deep River Waterpark.

**2000** The hog barn at Buckley Homestead County Park is renovated with Historical Preservation Grant.

Administrative Division and Planning



*Deep River Waterpark opened in 1995. The Courthouse splashpad area, modeled after Lake County's old courthouse, was added after the park was opened.*



*"The Dragon" speed slide was added to Deep River Waterpark in 1999.*

- and Development Division are moved to new corporate offices located on Route 30 on the Deep River County Park campus.
- 2001** Construction began on the Oak Savannah Bike Trail from Oak Ridge Prairie east to Porter County.
- Birding room was added to the Gibson Woods Environmental Awareness Center.
- Nine additional holes were added on the Lemon Lake County Park disc golf course.
- 2002** Park Board reorganizes the department adding two new divisions, Park Services and Visitor Services.
- 2003** New playground and sand volleyball courts added to Lemon Lake County Park.
- New irrigation system and reservoirs added to Turkey Creek Golf Course.
- 2004** Lake County Council and the State of Indiana Department of Local Government Finance approved \$30.3 million capital development plan to be repaid from revenue-based facilities and programs.
- Oak Savannah multi-use asphalt trail opened on National Trails Day in June. Trail head is located at Oak Ridge Prairie County Park.
- Dogwood Run, a no-leash dog facility, is added to Lemon Lake County Park.
- Concessions building with restrooms added near playground at Lemon Lake County Park.
- 2005** Deep River Waterpark doubled in size in an expansion that included the addition of an interactive family play area, an action river, dueling bowl slides, and visitor amenities.
- Ice Skating Plaza opened at Deep River Waterpark.
- Eighty-three acres were acquired at Oak Savannah Trail, 30 acres acquired at Deep River County Park, 20 acres acquired at Beaver Dam, and 88 acres acquired at Cedar Creek Golf Course.
- Dedication of the Conway Observatory at Buckley Homestead County Park.
- 2006** Banquet Hall was opened at Lake Etta County Park.
- Water lines extended to Dogwood Run at Lemon Lake County Park.
- Acquisition of 20 acres at Beaver Dam and minimal acreage acquired at both Lake Etta County Park and Three Rivers County Park.
- 2007** Utilities extended and construction began on Bellaboo's Play and Discovery Center at Three Rivers County Park.
- Park Services Division and Visitor Services Division moved to the Deep River Campus on the corporate office grounds.
- Eleven acres were acquired at Deep River County Park.
- 2008** Construction continued on the Children's Play and Discovery Center (Bellaboo's) at Three Rivers County Park.
- Acquisition of nine acres at Oak Ridge Prairie County Park.
- Conway Observatory at Buckley Homestead County Park was opened.
- 2009** 38 acres (Ivan Gatlin Nature Preserve) along the Erie Lackawanna Trail at Prairie Estates in Schererville is transferred to LCPRD via an inter-local government agreement involving Schererville Parks, Town of Schererville, Lake County Drainage Board, Lake County Surveyors Office, and the Lake County Commissioners.



*Bellaboo's Discovery Play and Discovery Center opened at Three River's County Park in 2009.*

- Children's Play and Discovery Center (Bellaboo's) at Three Rivers County Park opened.
- 2010** PDGA World's Professional Disc Golf Tournament held at Lemon Lake County Park.
- New 20 car parking lot for Erie Lackawanna Trail at Burr Street / 73rd Avenue in Schererville was constructed and opened.
- New four car parking lot, playground, .75 mile long trail spur, and 38 acre Ivan Gatlin Nature Preserve was opened for the Erie Lackawanna Trail.
- Five acres were acquired at Oak Ridge Prairie County Park.
- Gold (18 holes) and White (18 holes) courses were opened to the existing Disc Golf Courses at Lemon Lake County Park.
- 2011** 14 acres were acquired at Deep River County Park north of US Route 30.
- Oak Ridge Prairie County Park had 28 acres added on the northeast corner of the park.
- 2012** Acquired six acres in Crown Point for future Veterans Memorial Parkway Trail.
- 2013** PDGA World's Professional Disc Golf Tournament held at Lemon Lake County Park and one other Lake County course.
- One acre added to Three Rivers County Park in the center of the park in Lake Station.
- Three acres were added to the Veterans Memorial Parkway Trail.
- Five acres were added to Oak Ridge Prairie County Park in the northeast corner the park.

41 acres were donated to Buckley Homestead County Park.

Oak Savannah Trail 30 car parking lot at Cleveland Street / Route 51 in Hobart was paved. In addition new drop bollards, fencing, landscaping, signage, and other amenities were installed along nine miles of the trail from Oak Ridge Prairie County Park to County Line Road.

## Park and Recreation Board Profile

The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department is governed by the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board, a statutory bi-partisan policy-making body appointed by the executive, legislative and judicial branches of county government and with a single appointment from the mayors of Gary, Hammond and East Chicago and an appointment from the Cooperative Extension Coordinator.

This Board formulates and adopts policies related to the operation, management, and planning of the park and recreation facilities and activities within the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department. The Parks and Recreation Board meet publicly on the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm CST at the Lake County Government Center located at 2293 Main Street, Crown Point, Indiana 46307. The current Lake County Parks and Recreation Board members are listed in the chart on page 20.

## Park and Recreation Department Profile

Day-to-day management and operations are administered by the Department's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Operating Officer (COO). The CEO acts as Secretary to the Board and is appointed by the Board on an annual basis. The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department is made up of five divisions that are responsible for a variety of functions. An organizational chart of the Department is shown on page 21.

## Division Descriptions

### Administrative Services Division

Responsible for management of daily operations of the Lake County Parks and

## Lake County Parks and Recreation Board Members

Name/Address	Term	Appointing Authority
George S. Kolettis (Democrat)	Jan. 2012 – Dec. 2015 (4 year term)	Judge Paras (formerly Arrendondo)
John Howard (Republican)	Jan. 2010 – Dec. 2013 (4 year term)	Judge Paras (formerly Arrendondo)
Christopher Dilts (Republican)	Jan. 2013 – Dec. 2016 (4 year term)	County Council
Hester Cannon (Democrat)	Jan. 2011 – Dec. 2014 (4 year term)	County Council
Jim Tonkovich (Democrat)	Jan. 2013 – Dec. 2016 (4 year term)	County Commissioners
Open (Republican)	Jan 2012-Dec 2015	Mayoral Appt
Janet Reed Purdue Extension Lake County	Continual	

Recreation Department, the Administrative Services Division oversees human resources, finance and budget management. Additionally Administrative Services provides information and technology support as well as providing support services concerning reservations and public information. The Administrative Staff, consisting of the CEO, COO, Division Superintendents and other key personnel, work in concert to provide long range planning and utilization of Departmental resources.

### Park Services Division

The Park Services Division is responsible for providing support services to other divisions in the areas of equipment maintenance and repair, in-house construction, major facility maintenance projects, horticulture, and trails and natural areas maintenance.

### Park Operations Division

The Park Operations Division's responsibilities include the day to day operation and maintenance of the majority of the Lake County Parks properties and facilities. The Division also has security and risk management functions as part of its Departmental role.

### Business Development Division

The Business Development Division's responsibilities center on revenue generating operations, programs, and their associated facilities. The Division is responsible for management, operational and maintenance activities that ensure successful revenue generation at each revenue center.

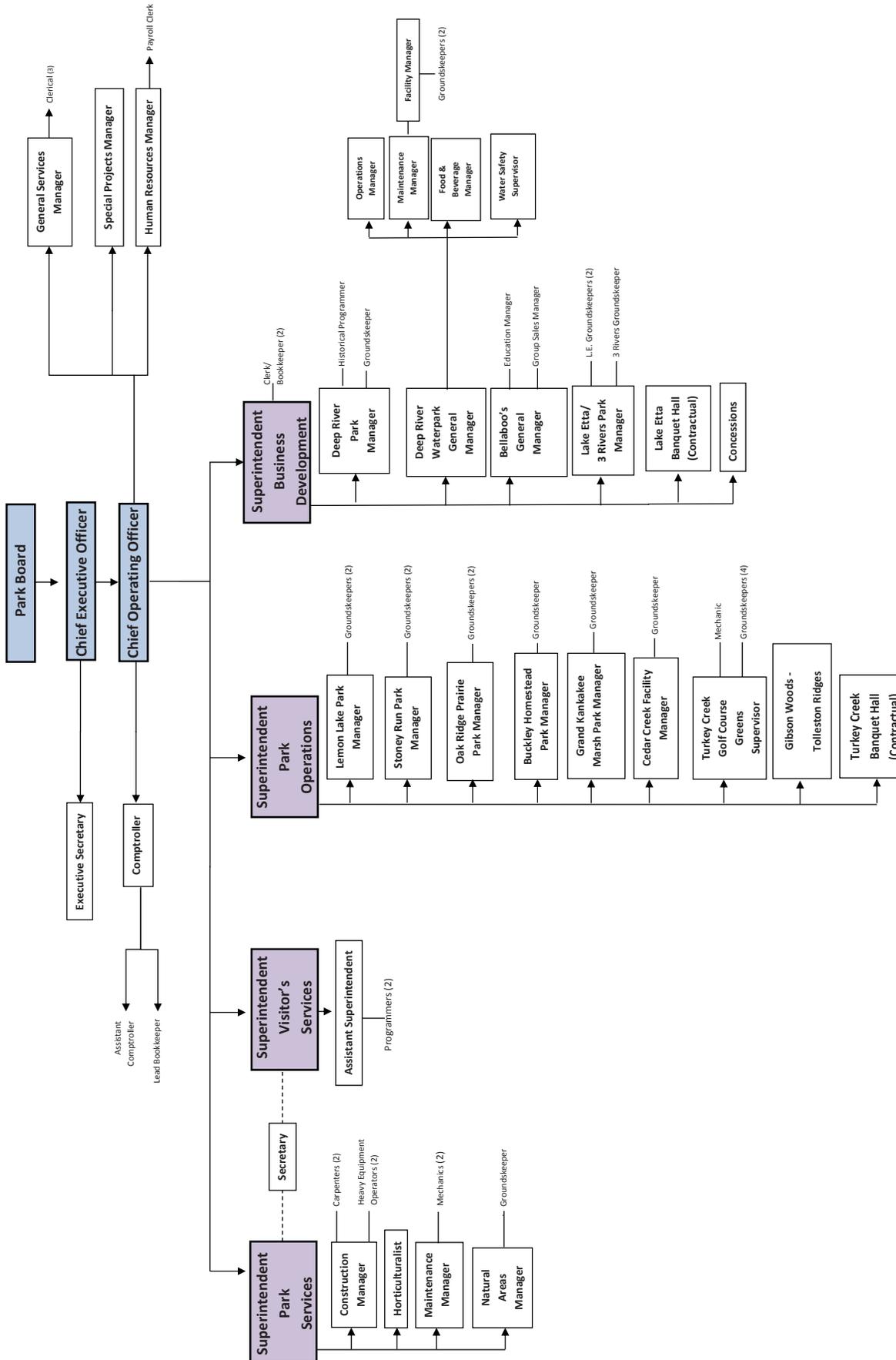
### Visitor Services Division

The Visitor Services Division is responsible for the development and implementation of a variety of recreational and educational programs that complement and enhance the Park Department's park sites and facilities. These include environmental, historical, and cultural programs. The Division is also responsible for the promotion and public relation efforts of the Parks Department.

## Park Board Mission and Goals

The Mission of the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board is to create and responsibly manage a county-wide system of parks and open space resources and to provide recreational, cultural, and educational programs based on

# Lake County Parks and Recreation: Heirarchy Chart



these resources for the use and enjoyment of all Lake County residents and visitors.

The Lake County Parks and Recreation Board is committed to providing facilities and services to meet the changing needs of the residents of Lake County. The goals of the Parks and Recreation Board reflect the understanding that it is important to provide both natural open space and recreation amenities in a balanced manner that respects the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the region. The Board is guided by the following goals:

**Goal One:** Acquire sufficient open space to meet current and future county park and recreation needs in Lake County, Indiana.

**Goal Two:** Expand the land base at existing Lake County Park facilities.

**Goal Three:** Maintain, operate, and develop recreation facilities that stimulate human development in concert with the environment.

**Goal Four:** Pursue various funding sources and alternatives for land acquisition and development of the Lake County Park System.

**Goal Five:** Develop, maintain, and promote conservation management practices for the county's natural resources.

**Goal Six:** Maintain, operate, and develop outdoor recreation and education programs that provide enriching experiences in people's lives and that increase public awareness of environmental relationships.

**Goal Seven:** Preserve the county's unique ecologically sensitive areas.

**Goal Eight:** Promote the development of greenways, open spaces, and park sites that improve the visual and spatial qualities of the county, provide buffers and edges to urban developments, and protect sensitive natural areas from encroachment by the development of open space.

**Goal Nine:** Participate in the urban community utilizing planning, programming, land acquisition, and development.

**Goal Ten:** Increase public relations and

efforts toward use of an effective network for disseminating information and increasing public awareness of parks and recreation.

**Goal Eleven:** Support legislation favorable to the advancement of parks and recreation.

**Goal Twelve:** Preserve significant historical sites.

**Goal Thirteen:** Develop, institute, and manage facilities, programs, and departmental procedures that efficiently and effectively enhance revenues from non-taxed base sources.

## Budget

From its early beginnings the guiding philosophy of the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department has been one of investing; Investing, for the present and for the future, through the creation of quality park and recreation opportunities. For 46 years it's been working well, and there's no reason to think that it won't continue. But it takes work and a creative strategy. In these days of finite tax resources, the Lake County Parks, like most other departments, is challenged to maintain, and indeed increase, services while facing the prospect of fewer resources.

The Lake County Park Department has a dedicated tax rate, but the board, staff, and volunteers knew long ago that the tax levy would not allow for continued growth. While crucial to the operation of the twelve county parks and other green spaces, the traditional tax revenue would not support additional services demanded by the public. It was clear that alternative sources of revenue must be created.

Annually, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), and Comptroller work together with staff and the board of directors to develop the annual budget based on the estimated tax revenue and the projected department-generated revenues. The County Council approves the department budget locally before it is sent downstate for final approval from the state Department of Local Government Finance. The adjacent chart shows the budget for the past three years as well as the approved 2014 budget.

**2011:** \$5,859,935.00

**2012:** \$5,966,845.00

**2013:** \$5,950,845.00

**2014:** \$5,955,345.00

## Collaboration

A quick glance through the history section provides a snapshot of the many collaborations and partnerships that have played an instrumental role in the development of the Lake County Park system

In 1970, the department was approved for the first of many grants that would follow. Acquisition and development at several of the park sites was supported through matching Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. Grants were also received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and from businesses and not-for-profits. Grant money totaling more than \$10 million has been received for various projects throughout the system.

But grants weren't the only support for the growing park system. Private donations and volunteer efforts have always played a vital role. Mrs. Rose Buckley Pearce donated her 140 year old family homestead near Lowell for what is now Buckley Homestead, and Dr. Joseph Jarabek donated more than 38 acres of land at Deep River. Six ladies from the Cedar Lake Junior Women's Club and the Indiana Bell Pioneers donated time and money to construct the hard surface Touchstone Trail around Lemon Lake. Countless hours of volunteer labor and fundraising were dedicated to the development and enhancement of a Memorial at Stoney Run, now the official Lake County Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. Throughout the years, hundreds of volunteers giving thousands of hours have worked together with park department personnel and board members to meet the goals of providing benefits through a versatile park system balancing preservation, conservation, and recreation.

Cooperative ventures with other agencies have also been a way to manage the park system. An early partnership was established in 1977 when the park department assumed management of Lake Etta under an inter-local government agreement with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Today that agreement continues with the Little Calumet River Basin

Development Commission. In 1999 the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Chicago District, and the Lake County Parks conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for recreation enhancements at Lake Etta, which provided for canoe access to the Little Calumet River.

Much of the fill used to build the wide levee flood control development along the Interstate 80/94 corridor was taken from land at Deep River County Park. Through an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission, and the Lake County Park Board, soil was dug, creating two lakes adjoining the hiking trails at Deep River, providing additional natural habitat to the park site.

An alliance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Waterfowl U.S.A. was instrumental in developing Little Hickory at the Grand Kankakee Marsh, and cooperation between Ducks Unlimited and the Park Board allowed for the restoration of Hog Marsh, also at Grand Kankakee Marsh. One of the largest conservation projects in the state of Indiana was the Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Project, partially funded by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The IGKMRP was initiated to provide an avenue for willing partners to work together to attain shared goals and objectives. The partnership included 30 governmental agencies, not-for-profit organizations, small businesses, and corporate sponsors from throughout Northwest Indiana who came together and took the first steps in a ten year program to rekindle the local heritage of the historic Grand Kankakee marsh. The early successes have only been surpassed by the aspirations of making the riverine marsh system a reality again. Working within a realistic focus, the project management team operated under a well-defined set of criteria in the direction set by the partners.

In recent years the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board and the City of Hobart have worked together to develop support amenities along the Oak Savannah Trail at Robinson Lake. Through grants and cooperative efforts Lake County Parks, Shirley Heinze Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources- Division of Nature Preserves have developed a management

agreement for restoration work at Gibson Woods Nature Preserve. An Engineering and Restoration agreement at Beaver Dam between the Lake Heritage Parks Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, and the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board as well as an agreement for use of the Erie Lackawanna Trail between Nipsco and the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board has been formed.

The types of collaboration are quite varied, with some involving formal agreements while others are informal or simply efforts to work toward common goals. Regardless of the type or depth, working together through many means has permitted the Lake County Parks to thrive.



# CHAPTER 2

## CHAPTER TWO: FEATURES OF PLANNING AREA

Lake County has a rich environmental, cultural, and industrial history. While many of the natural features of the region have been lost to development, remnants of these important habitats remain. Culturally, northwest Indiana was long viewed as a melting pot, primarily due to the many emigrating cultures who settled here corresponding to the massive industrial development.

### Location

The Lake County Parks and Recreation District is conterminous with the boundaries of Lake County, Indiana which is located in northwestern Indiana, approximately 30 miles southeast of Chicago and 135 miles northwest of Indianapolis. Lake Michigan comprises the county's northern border.

Lake County has the second largest population in the State and has strong manufacturing, commercial and service sectors. Northwestern Indiana is known as the "Steel Capital of the World." Located less than 30 miles from downtown Chicago, Lake County offers access

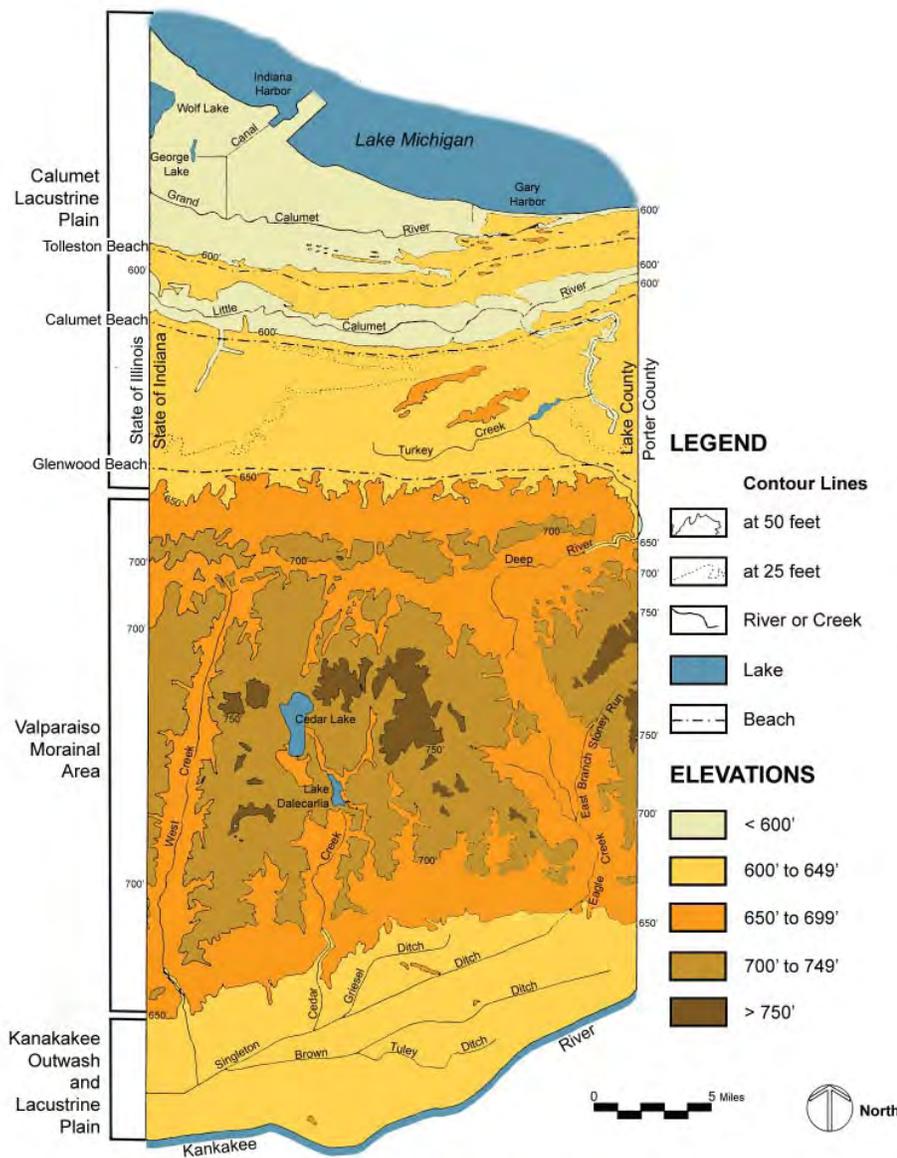
to major highways, primarily the Indiana Toll Road (I-80/90), Interstate 94 and Interstate 65. International port facilities are located on the shores of Lake Michigan at Burns International Harbor in Porter County, less than 10 miles from Lake County.

### Natural Features and Landscape

#### Natural Landscape and Woodlands

Pre-settlement Lake County had a diversity of natural features. A band of dune and swale habitat surrounded the shore of Lake Michigan. The northwest corner of the county was primarily grassland with extensive marsh and wet prairie areas. The central uplands were covered with mesic prairie, oak-savannah, oak-hickory forest, and a few small areas of beech-maple forest. The southern portion of the county was a vast wetland area resulting from the Kankakee River floodplain.

Much of Lake County's original natural features have been lost to development. Particularly hard hit was the unique dune and swale environment along Lake Michigan and the northern third



large area of such lands are located in the north along the Little Calumet River and in the south along the Kankakee River, which was once one of the largest freshwater marshes in the country.

**Geology, Topography, and Soils**

Three physiographic units identify Lake County; The Calumet Lacustrine Plain in the northern region, the Valparaiso Morainial Area in the central region, and the Kankakee Outwash Plain in the southern region.

The Calumet Lacustrine Plain is a sandy region surrounding the southern end of Lake Michigan, marking the site of former Lake Chicago. As the glacial lake retreated, level lakebed areas, sand bars, and old beach ridges were left. Changing rates of melting, movement of the earth and crust or possible breaks in the moraine resulted in three major fluctuations in the lake’s level. The most ancient of these lake stages existed some 12,000 to 14,000 years ago, and is referred to as the Glenwood Stage. This stage can be seen along US Highway 30 between Dyer and US Highway 41.

The Calumet Stage existed some 9,000 to 12,000 years ago. The shoreline and dunes associated with this stage can scarcely be distinguished from dunes of the latest stage of Lake Michigan.

The Valparaiso Morainial Area is just south of the Calumet Lacustrine Plain. It is a composite of several end moraines, one super-imposed atop the other in response to minor fluctuations of the terminus of the retreating tongue of glacial ice. This land averages about 150 feet higher than the adjacent plain to the north. Moraines are low hills of earth and rock left behind by melting glaciers at the end of the ice age.

The Kankakee Outwash, located south and southeast of the Valparaiso Morainial Area is a low, poorly drained sandy area. It consists of extensive glacial outwash, and/or lake and river deposits formed by numerous cycles during the Wisconsin placation.

Each Lake County Park area has been identified due to their unique geologic and natural features, which ultimately guide decisions on development, management, operations, or

of the county. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as well as Gibson Woods and Tolleston Ridges Nature Preserves and similar dune and swale areas along the lakeshore are some of the remnant and native areas preserved from this once dominant ecosystem.

Most of the remaining wooded areas are located along the major rivers and streams. A considerable amount of undeveloped land remains as lowlands and marshes. This land is not suited for urban development and in many cases is not tillable. Such land offers an excellent opportunity for conservation and open space. A

programming. For example, the 131 acres of Gibson Woods Nature Preserve is one of the last sizeable remnants of high quality dune and swale topography remaining in the Midwest. Because of the widespread urbanization and industrialization in Northwest Indiana, this type of topography and its associated natural communities have been almost entirely eliminated. The rare environment, surrounded by urban development, was only preserved as it was deemed surplus railroad property of the Gibson Yards. While owned and operated by the Lake County Park Board, Gibson Woods Nature Preserve is a state dedicated nature preserve due to its rare plants and animals, some listed as endangered.

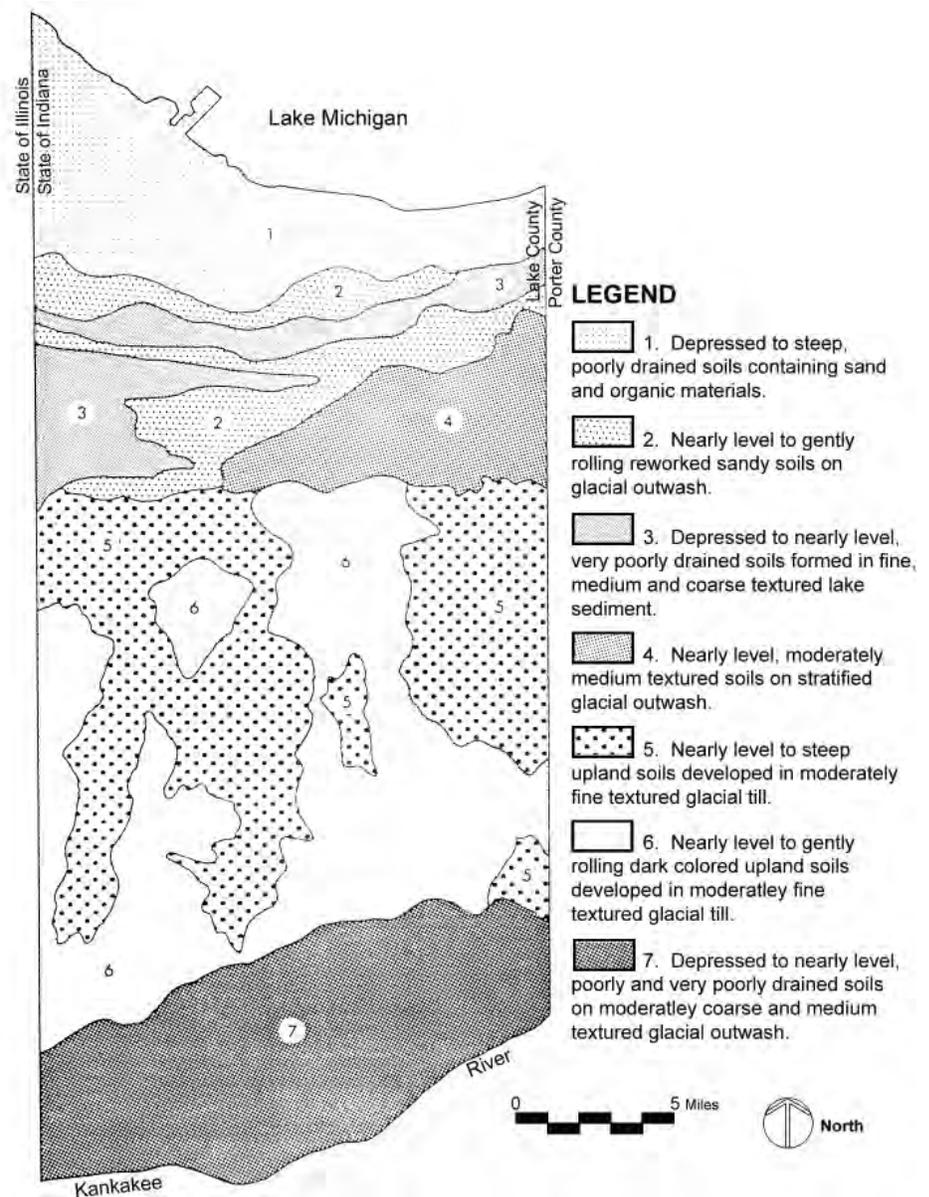
### Drainage and Water Resources

As a part of the intercontinental divide, the Valparaiso Moraine divides the regional drainage pattern in two, with one system flowing into the Saint Lawrence River system and the other system flowing into the Gulf of Mexico via the Mississippi River system. The northern part of Lake County is in the Little Calumet Watershed, which is a sub-area of the Great Lakes/Saint Lawrence River watershed that flows east toward the Atlantic Ocean. This watershed flows through the Calumet River, Little Calumet River, Turkey Creek, Deep River, and a host of tributaries and man-made drainage ways, emptying into Lake Michigan at various points along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

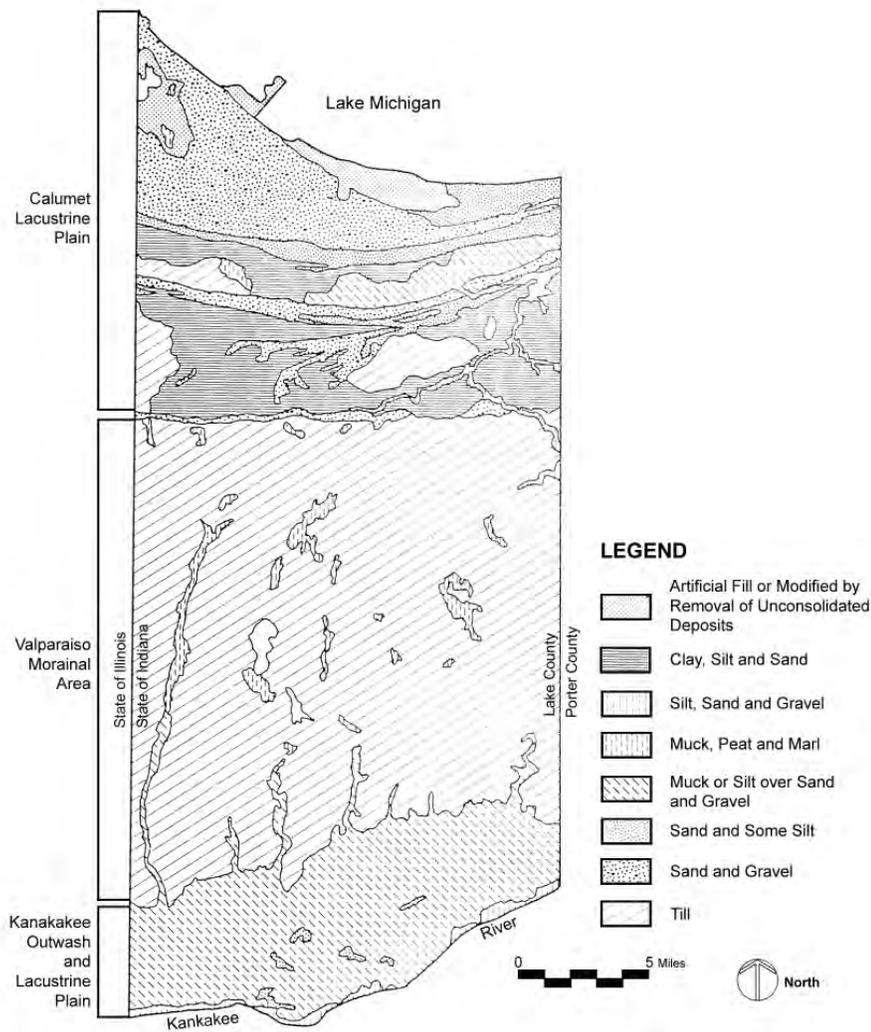
The southern part of Lake County is in the Mississippi River watershed, which flows west and south toward the Gulf of Mexico. The natural drainage in this area, which includes Eagle Creek, Cedar Creek, West Creek, and various tributaries, has been supplemented by an extensive network of ditches and field tile that flow into the Kankakee River. This continental watershed divide runs through Lemon Lake County Park.

### Wildlife Habitat

Lake County is home to a variety of woodland and grassland mammals as well as significant fishery and aviary habitat. As more of Lake County is developed however, habitat is disappearing, making land acquisition and open space management of significant importance.



Most of the woodland and grassland inhabitants are traditional species such as white-tail deer, rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, coyote, and fox. However, the Franklin's Ground Squirrel makes its home here as well, including on some of the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department lands. Franklin's Ground Squirrel has become rare in Indiana, which emphasizes the importance of preserving or restoring their natural habitat. The visibility of the coyote population has increased as the deer population has grown and development has driven them out of their traditional woodlots. Bobcat and badger have also been sighted, though still a rare



on the south shore of Lake Michigan also provides many opportunities for accommodating the migration of birds as they make their treks north and south each year. Lake County falls within the Mississippi flyway, one of four major migration routes in the country. The Lake Michigan shoreline, Kankakee River, numerous streams and lakes, and varieties of habitat that provide forage allow Lake County to provide an important link in this annual trek.

In Lake County, bird migration is affected by Lake Michigan. A variety of warblers, hawks, herons, and various birds of prey can be seen each year, along with major duck and geese populations. The nearby Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area has long been known as a prime locale for the migrating Sandhill Crane. More and more Sandhill Cranes are also seen annually in the fields at the Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park. A nesting pair of Bald Eagles has been documented along the Little Calumet River to the east of Lake Etta County Park, and wild turkey are making their way north into numerous Lake County Park sites.

**Climate**

Lake County is located in a temperate four-season climate that is moderated by Lake Michigan. Like all of the lands adjacent to the Great Lakes, and especially those south and east of the lakes, the temperatures and precipitation levels in Lake County are significantly influenced by Lake Michigan. During the summer months, the lake provides a cooling effect as the water temperatures moderate the ambient air temperatures in the region. Conversely, winds crossing the lake in the winter are raised by the warmer open waters of the lake. These effects are diminished with distance away from the shoreline, with the effects virtually non-existent greater than ten miles from the shore. Precipitation during the winter months is affected as the northern winds crossing the lake pick up moisture, dropping greater snow in a band along the lake shore. The average summer temperature in Lake County is 77.7 degrees, while the average winter high is 29.4 degrees. Precipitation averages 33 inches annually. The lake effect on these statistics is evident simply by comparing the coastal and inland differences. The average summer high in Crown Point is 86.9 degrees, 13.3 degrees higher than Gary. In the winter months, the average high

occurrence in northwestern Indiana.

The fishery habitats in Lake County are numerous and include natural fisheries as well as those that are stocked by State and local agencies. White perch, bluegill, largemouth bass, crappie, and yellow perch represent the largest fishery populations. It is unfortunate that white perch tops this list, as they are somewhat responsible for the decline of other species.

Wolf Lake and Cedar Lake are two fisheries that have experienced the decline of game fish as the white perch feed on their eggs. Northern Pike, Walleye, and Muskie are also found in Wolf Lake. Walleye and largemouth bass do provide good sports fishing opportunities as well, especially in lakes where management programs are in place.

In addition to providing traditional habitat for numerous bird species, Lake County’s location

temperature in Gary is 24.8 degrees, 3.1 degrees higher than Crown Point. Rainfall and snowfall amounts are similar, though communities a little further south average 10" less snowfall.

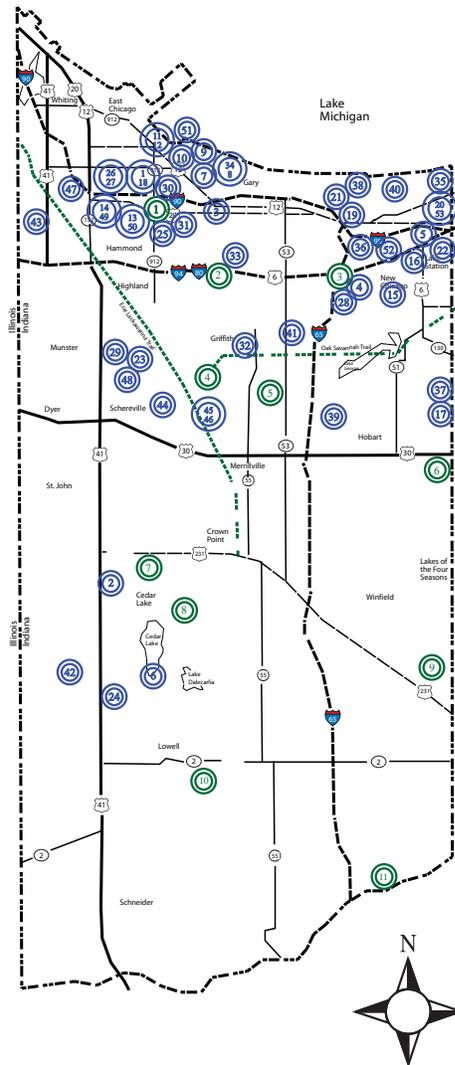
Weather plays a critical role in the success of programs and revenue generation for the Lake County Parks. Facilities like Deep River Waterpark, with a season that runs from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, depend on hot summers to generate attendance. Likewise the golf revenues suffer when spring weather is cold and rainy and the season is delayed. In an effort to extend public recreational opportunities as well as generate off-season income, Deep River Waterpark added a family ice skating plaza that operates from late November through late February as part of its 2005 expansion project.

### Resource Protection

The natural, cultural, and historic resources of Lake County continue to be impacted as confused development and neglect reduce the opportunity to further study and understand them. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) maintains an inventory and tracks these resources with the hope that they, as well as other private and public agencies, might maintain and preserve these important assets. Natural resources are particularly the victims of development, and the most in need of protection.

Unique ecological and historic conditions occur on several sites in Lake County. It is important that these sites be preserved and that they be maintained in their natural states and not used for active recreation purposes. It is important, however, to provide residents with opportunities to learn from these resources and develop a better understanding of the relationships of our natural resources in a global environment. The IDNR resource inventory provides an opportunity for the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department to be stewards of the land, and protect these resources before they are lost. The following list identifies natural areas and sensitive sites that should be considered for resource protection.

1. Beemsterboer Property
2. Biesecker Prairie
3. Brunswick Center Savanna
4. Burr Oak Woods



5. Calumet Prairie
6. Cedar Lake Marsh
7. Clark and Pine Dune Swale
8. Clark and Pine East
9. Clark and Pine Nature Preserve
10. Clark and Pine Refraction
11. Clark Junction East
12. Clark Junction West
13. Cline Dune and Swale
14. Conrail Site
15. Cressmore Prairie
16. Deep River Marsh
17. Deep River Woods
18. Dupont Tract
19. Gary Industrial Foundation
20. Gary School City
21. Gary Works Natural Area

## Lake County Park Sites

- ① **Gibson Woods Nature Preserve**  
6201 Parrish Ave., Hammond, Indiana 46323
- ② **Lake Etta**  
4801 W. 29th Ave., Gary, Indiana 46406
- ③ **Three Rivers**  
2800 Kansas St., Gary, Indiana 46405
- ④ **Oak Ridge Prairie**  
301 S. Colfax St., Griffith, Indiana 46319
- ⑤ **Turkey Creek Golf Course**  
6400 Harrison St., Merrillville, Indiana 46410
- ⑥ **Deep River: Woods Mill & Visitor Center**  
9410 Old Lincoln Hwy., Hobart, Indiana 46342
- Deep River County Line Road Entrance**
- Deep River Waterpark**  
9001 East U.S. Hwy. 30, Crown Point, Indiana 46301
- ⑦ **Cedar Creek Golf Course**  
10483 W. 109th Ave., Cedar Lake, Indiana 46303
- ⑧ **Lemon Lake**  
6322 W. 133rd Ave., Crown Point, Indiana 46307
- ⑨ **Stoney Run**  
8900 E 142nd Ave., Hebron, Indiana 46341
- ⑩ **Buckley Homestead**  
3606 Belshaw Rd., Lowell, Indiana 46356
- ⑪ **Grand Kankakee Marsh**  
21690 Range Line Rd., Hebron, Indiana 46341

## Trails

- ..... **Oak Savannah Trail**
- ..... **Erie Lackawanna**

22. Garyton Wetlands
23. Gaylord Butterfly Site
24. German Methodist Cemetery
25. Gibson Woods Nature Preserve
26. Grand Calumet Tern Site
27. Halostab Property
28. Hobart Marsh
29. Hoosier Prairie Nature Preserve
30. Ivanhoe Dune and Swale
31. Ivanhoe South Dune and Swale
32. Lake County PNA #34
33. Lake Etta Expansion East
34. Lakeshore Railroad Prairie
35. Lakewood Dune Forest
36. Liverpool Nature Preserve
37. Laura Lake
38. Marquette Park
39. Merrillville Mire
40. Miller Interdunal Ponds
41. Monastary Woods
42. Mystery Mounds
43. NIPSCO/Ashland Chemical Site
44. Oak Ridge Prairie West
45. Park Site 4
46. Prairie Ridge
47. Roxanna Pond
48. St. John Prairie
49. Seidner Dune and Swale
50. Tolleston Ridge Addition
51. US Steel Prairie
52. Van Buren Street Sites
53. Wood Lake Dune Savanna

## Historical Features

### Brief History

Much of the Great Lakes region was occupied by the Potawatomi Nation dating back over 500 years. The Potawatomi were an Algonquian-speaking people who practiced both an agricultural and hunter-gatherer lifestyle, utilizing the abundant supplies of fish and waterfowl in the region. They established a number of trails throughout the area that later became routes for the fur trade. French traders set up trading posts throughout the region, which helped the Potawatomi to grow their Nation to include over five million acres in what are now five of the Great Lakes states. Following the British victory in the French and Indian War the Potawatomi, after having sided with the French and already being displaced by white settlers, moved further into the wilderness areas.

Surveyors first began setting monuments in what is now Lake County in the late 1820s. The first settlers arrived following treaties signed in 1826 and 1832, and squatted on lands on Cedar Lake and along the Deep River from the Crown Point to Hobart areas, where the soils of the Valparaiso Moraine provided quality agricultural lands. In 1837 Lake County was created from what had been the western half of Porter County, and in 1841 Crown Point became the County seat. During this period land sales began in LaPorte. A union of squatters, formed to protect their land claims, travelled to LaPorte to garner title to their lands.

The Great Sauk Trail, an early transportation route passed through Ross Township in the east central section of Lake County. One of the first permanent settlers in Ross Township was Massachusetts native John Wood who purchased land in 1835 on Sauk Trail along Deep River. Two years later, Wood opened a saw mill on the site and the next year the county's first grist mill which remained in operation until the current brick grist mill was built by Wood's son Nathan in 1876. Several original homes, including the elaborate Italianate style home built by Nathan remain today. Both the grist mill and Nathan's home are part of the historic section of Deep River County Park.

By 1840, the population of Lake County had reached over 1,400, but with the center of agriculture in Lake County so far from the City of Chicago, growth was somewhat moderated.

By 1850, nearly 4,000 people resided in the County. Many German immigrants were among these early settlers, and their heritage is reflected in the names of many of the communities that they established, including St. John, Schererville, Brunswick, Klaasville, and Whiting. During the 1850s, Aaron Norton Hart arrived from Philadelphia with his family and started changing the history and cultural landscape of Lake County. Mr. Hart purchased fifteen thousand acres of mostly swamp land from the government and set about making the land usable. Operating a road and ditch digging business, Mr. Hart oversaw development of an extensive system of drainage ditches. The Hart Ditch, which connects to the Little Calumet River, opened up nearly 20,000 acres of fertile land for settlement and agriculture. The Cady

Marsh Ditch and Spring Street Ditch were later built, creating still more productive land.

At about the same time, the first railroad line crossed the northern part of Lake County, providing area farmers with direct access to the Chicago market for their goods. Raw materials also were more easily brought into the County, and the increase in trade allowed the settlers to significantly modify their way of life. Large tracts of land along the rail lines were purchased by some visionary individuals, and in 1869 George Hammond and his partners opened a meat packing plant along the Grand Calumet River near the state line. As prospective workers and their families came seeking jobs, a new town was developed adjacent to the plant.

New railroads brought more industrial development to the southern shores of Lake Michigan. The industrial north and rural south of Lake County began to experience tensions when the Pullman strike of 1894 affected the farmer's ability to get their perishable goods to market in Chicago. As more industry arrived, housing, schools, churches and businesses were provided to serve their workers. By 1900, over half the population of Lake County was located in only three communities: Whiting, Hammond, and East Chicago. United States Steel opened a new factory in Gary in 1906, to join Standard Oil in Whiting and Inland Steel in East Chicago as representative of the symbiotic relationships between the industrial giants and the communities that grew up around them.

The first two decades of the 1900s saw more immigrants from eastern European countries coming to find jobs in the steel industry, and some communities reflected the scope of this immigration in their majority foreign-born populous. By 1920, the population of northwestern Indiana was nearly one quarter of a million. Business and industry continued to prosper, and new development continued to change the landscape of the County. By 1930, approximately 60 percent of the industrial belt of Lake County was made up of immigrants. But native-born Americans were maturing and enjoying prosperity as well and were becoming an ever-higher percentage of the population.

The 1930s saw the Great Depression end the

industrial expansion, and Lake County endured a period of flat growth until the advent of World War II. During this period the majority immigrant population gave way to their children and grandchildren, as native-born Americans dominated the political and business world of Lake County. As the war progressed, emigrants of Mexican and African-American descent found jobs and affordable housing available. After the war, the development of the interstate highway system added fuel to an already booming housing and commercial development market. The new highway infrastructure allowed workers to live further from their places of employment and transitioned some of the Lake County communities into a dual role as self-sufficient community and bedroom suburb.

In the late 1960s, several factors caused a major decline in the economy of Lake County. Low-wage steel producers in other countries and smaller mill operations in the United States caused the major steel producers to lay off significant numbers of workers and in some cases, cease production entirely. There was a population exodus in the northern part of the County, with a 29 percent drop in Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago. At the same time, the central and southern parts of the County increased population by over 12 percent, but the overall population of Lake County fell from 546,253 to 475,594 over a twenty year period. During this time, a new mall and entertainment complex were built in Merrillville, and by 1990, the majority of Lake County's population no longer lived in the industrial communities in the northwest.

Throughout the 1990s and up until today, moderate growth has once again been evident in Lake County. New development, both commercial and residential, continues to build in the central and south county areas. In the industrial communities along the Lake Michigan shore, the steel makers have reinvested dollars to bring back a viable, though much scaled-down presence. Other industry has come in as well, but there has been a decided shift away from industry and manufacturing that can be seen even today in census numbers. A much greater diversity of employment has come to the region, with obvious jumps in service industries and recreational pursuits. Because these jobs pay less

than the manufacturing positions that they have replaced, the overall economy of the County remains relatively flat. The successes in the transition, however, should encourage a slow and steady rise in the quality of life in Lake County.

## Man-Made Features

### Road Network

Lake County is a confluence of several major interstates, US routes, and state roads. Interstate 65 in Lake County connects Chicago to Indianapolis and is also called the Casimir Pulaski Memorial Highway. Interstate 80/94/US 6 connects Lake County to Chicago and Michigan and is also called the Frank Borman Expressway from the Illinois state line east to the Indiana Toll Road interchange in the eastern portion of the county. Interstate 94 has been referred to as the Chicago-Detroit Industrial Freeway. US 6, which connects Lake County to Chicago and Ohio, is part of the Grand Army of the Republic Highway, a name that honors an American Civil War veterans association.

US 30 is part of the historic Lincoln Highway, the first transcontinental improved highway for automobiles across the United States of America. US 12 from Gary eastward is part of Dunes Highway, a connection between Gary and Michigan. US 41 runs north and south through Lake County, connecting the county to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to Florida. US 231 also runs north and south through Lake County, starting in St. John connecting to Florida.

State Road 53 is known locally as Broadway and also the Carolyn Brown Mosby Memorial Highway. State Road 51 is also known as the Adam Benjamin Memorial Highway. State Road 912, or Cline Avenue, from US 12 north and westward is known as the Highway Construction Workers Memorial Highway. State Road 2 in the southern part of the county, starts at the Illinois border and runs east-west through the Town of Lowell all the way to South Bend, Indiana. State Road 55 starts in Gary and runs south to the Crawfordsville area in Central Indiana.

### Railroads

There are several passenger and freight rail lines that operate through Lake County. Amtrak, a publicly funded railroad service operated and managed as a for-profit corporation for

passenger movement, has a main hub in Chicago. Amtrak operates 374 trains per day and connects 896 destinations in 46 states. Although several Amtrak routes pass through Lake County, currently there are no stops.

There are several Class I railways that cross through Lake County, including the Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation, and the Norfolk Southern Railway.

Class III lines include the Chicago, Fort Wayne, and Eastern Railroad, the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad, the Gary Railway, and the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad. The Chicago, Fort Wayne, and Eastern Railroad is a short line railroad offering service from Tolleston, Indiana to Crestline, Ohio over the former Fort Wayne Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Traffic on the line includes grain, lumber products, chemicals, and steel. The Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railroad is known to many as the South Shore Line. This line is a Class III freight railroad operating between Chicago and South Bend, Indiana. The railroad serves as a link between Class I railroads and local industries in northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana. The Gary Railway is a class III switching carrier for local steel supply. The railway's primary customer is US Steel Works in Gary. However, it also serves additional steel processing groups. The Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad is a Class III railroad in the United States. The line starts northwest of Chicago in Franklin Park, Illinois traveling southeast around the city to its headquarters in Hammond, Indiana. The Gibson Yard, located in Hammond, is possibly the largest auto-switching operation in the United States.

### Commercial Airports

There are two public airports in Lake County: the Gary/Chicago International Airport, a public airport three miles northwest of Gary, Indiana, and the Griffith-Merrillville Airport, which is located just east of Griffith. Both airports are approximately one hour from Chicago's O'Hare International and Midway International Airports.

### Bus Lines and Public Transit

The Gary Public Transportation Corporation is the only commuter bus system in Lake County. The service offers numerous stops throughout

the city and neighboring suburbs. Other national transit services available to Lake County residents include First Transit, Inc., Greyhound Lines, and Coach USA Tri State.

### Ports

The Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor was founded in 1965 and located on the Lake Michigan shore of Indiana at the intersection of US Highway 12 and Indiana 249. The port is divided between the municipalities of Burns Harbor and Portage.

### Utilities

Lake County has a mix of public utilities and private utilities. The following is a summary of utilities available:

- Electricity/Gas: Northern Indiana Public Service Company;
- Water: Indiana American Water Company, Highland Water District, Winfield Water Works, St. John Water District, Dyer Water Works;
- Sewage: Gary Sanitary District, East Chicago Sanitary, Hammond Sanitary, Highland Sanitary, Whiting Sanitary, St. John Sanitary, Dyer Sanitary, Lake Station Sanitary;
- Telephone: AT&T;
- Cellular Phone: AT&T, Sprint, US Cellular, T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless;
- Internet: Comcast, AT&T-DLS, Wide Open West.

## Cultural Features

### Festivals and Events

There are several festivals and events that take place in Lake County. One of the oldest events is the annual Lake County Fair. In 1852, the Lake County Agricultural Society started the fair as a way to showcase the achievements of agriculture in the county. Agriculture continues to be the theme, but the fair has evolved to include carnival entertainment, exciting grandstand shows, horse shows, farm animals, a fireworks show, petting zoo, great food, and contests for kids and adults. Other notable festival and events include the following:

**Pierogi Fest:** Pierogi Fest, the pride of the City of Whiting, is an opportunity for the residents to celebrate their heritage while poking a little fun at themselves. Besides lots of pierogi and

an array of food vendors, the festival features a one-of-a-kind parade featuring women dressed in housecoats and babushkas like grandmothers, the lawnmower brigade in sandals and socks, plus Mr. Pierogi and Ms. Paczki.

**Festival of the Lakes:** The City of Hammond's annual Festival of the Lakes is five days of fun and entertainment on Wolf Lake, Lake George, and Lake Michigan. Taking place in July, the festival includes popular music acts, special events like the Fishing Derby and Polka Party, fair rides, games, and food vendors.

**A Christmas Story Festival:** Each year in the winter, the Indiana Welcome Center has a festival and exhibit inspired by the short stories and movie, *A Christmas Story*. Written by Jean Shepard, a native of Hammond, *A Christmas Story* focuses on his experiences while growing up in the area. The exhibit focuses on six animatronic window displays from Macy's Department Store in New York featuring different scenes of the iconic movie.

**Crown Point St. Patrick's Day Parade:** The City of Crown Point hosts a lighted night parade that features 32 entries representing the 32 counties of Ireland. The downtown area is decorated with green lights and window displays.

**The Legend of Sleepy Hollow at Buckley Homestead:** This unique four-day participatory outdoor theatre presentation is based on the classic short story by Washington Irving. The audience is guided into the past as they meet the townsfolk in search of Ichabod Crane who will happily share tales and legends like that of the Headless Horseman. This annual event is often sold out in the first few hours that tickets become available.

### Music and Arts

The South Shore Arts and Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra are located at The Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster, Indiana.

South Shore Arts champion the artistic identity of the South Shore by providing youth outreach, education for all ages, exhibitions, and regional arts services. South Shore Arts has been improving the quality of life along the South

Shore for over 75 years. South Shore Arts conducts over 400 classes each year in all media for all ages, including ceramics, photography, painting, drawing, cartooning, and acting.

Since 2008, South Shore Arts has managed the Northwest Indiana Symphony. The Northwest Indiana Symphony is dedicated to providing quality orchestral programming that promotes opportunities for enjoyment and expands interest in and understanding of diverse music. The Symphony is comprised of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra, the Northwest Indiana Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus, and the Women’s Association.

Year	Population
1970	546,253
1980	522,917
1990	475,594
2000	484,564
2010	496,005

Consistent with the 2008 – 2013 Master Plan Update, the central and south county areas have experienced the highest growth as new subdivisions and accompanying commercial development continue. The industrial corner in the northwest part of the county continues to be flat, or even declining in population.

The distribution of population within Lake County shows that 91% of the population lives within the 19 incorporated municipal areas. While the central and south county areas are exhibiting growth and the northwest is still stagnant or declining, approximately 40% of the Lake County population lives in three of these northwestern communities: Gary, Hammond, and Merrillville.

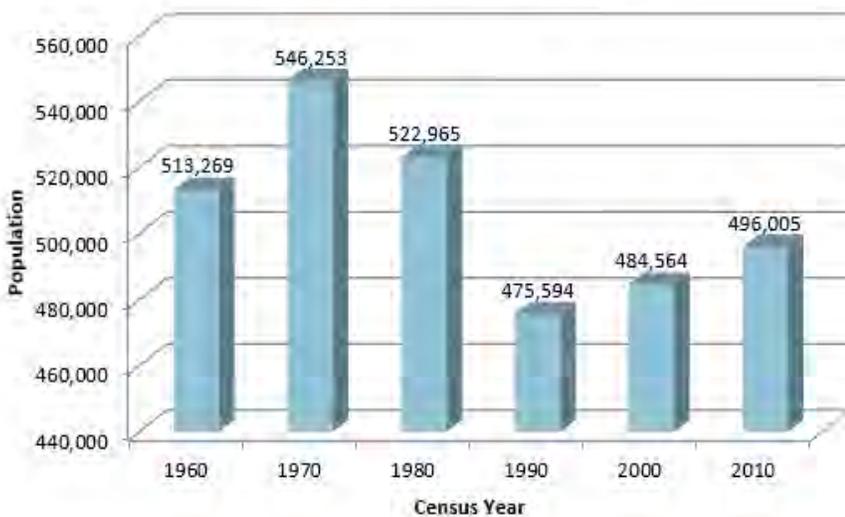
## Social and Economic Features

### Population

Lake County’s population of 496,005 makes it the second most populous county in the State of Indiana. The 4% growth over the past 20 years shows that Lake County is growing, but in a very slow manner that reflects its ongoing transition in economic base from manufacturing to service industries.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, the historical population of Lake County is reported as follows:

**Population Change**



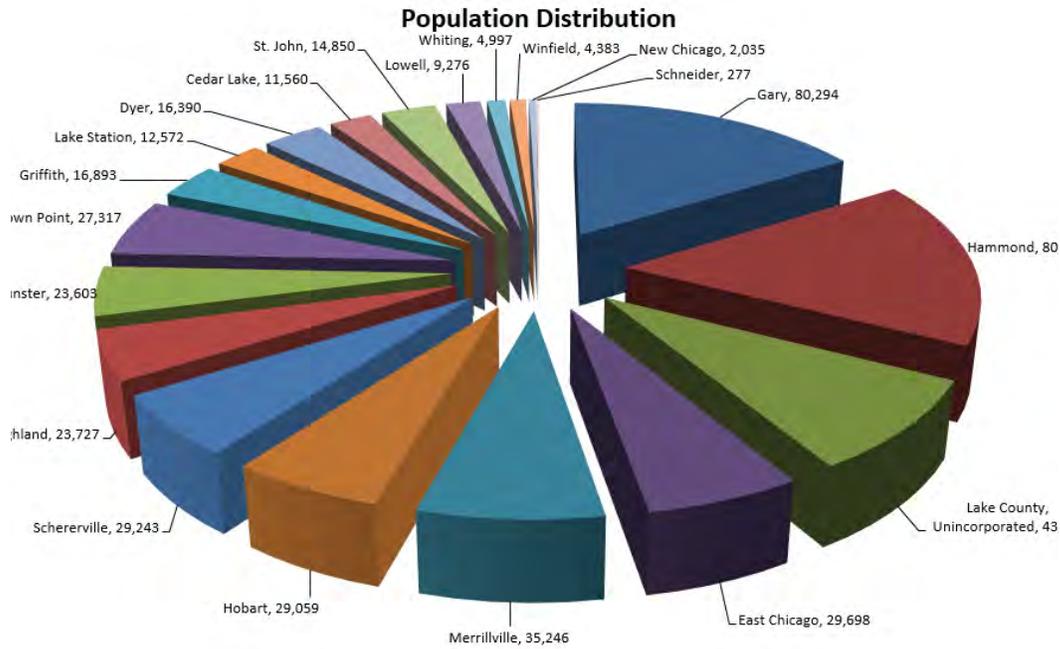
### Age Distribution

According to the 2010 US Census, the median age in Lake County is 37.4, an increase of 1.5 years since the 2000 US Census, and 4.4 years since the 1990 US Census. The aging population and other age trends will play a role in determining future amenity and program needs for Lake County residents. However the higher activity levels of the baby boom generation will also need to be considered as the need for passive recreation amenities and programs will not necessarily increase. These factors need to be evaluated in an ongoing manner in order to continually meet the needs and expectations of the residents.

### Race Distribution

While the majority of the population of Lake County remains predominantly White (64.4%), the minority population continues to grow (35.6%). Individuals of Black or African American descent make up the largest minority group (25.9%). The Hispanic/Latino population comprises 16.7% of the population, and 13.1% of the Hispanic/Latino population identify themselves as being of Mexican descent.

The race of the population can be important in determining certain needs in recreation if clear



ethnic groups with specific needs are identified. The most common need is offering printed materials and programs in languages other than English. The percentage of individuals in Lake County for whom English is not their primary language spoken has increased significantly since 1990. Spanish is the predominant primary language after English and is approaching a number that might warrant consideration of special programs and dual-language publications.

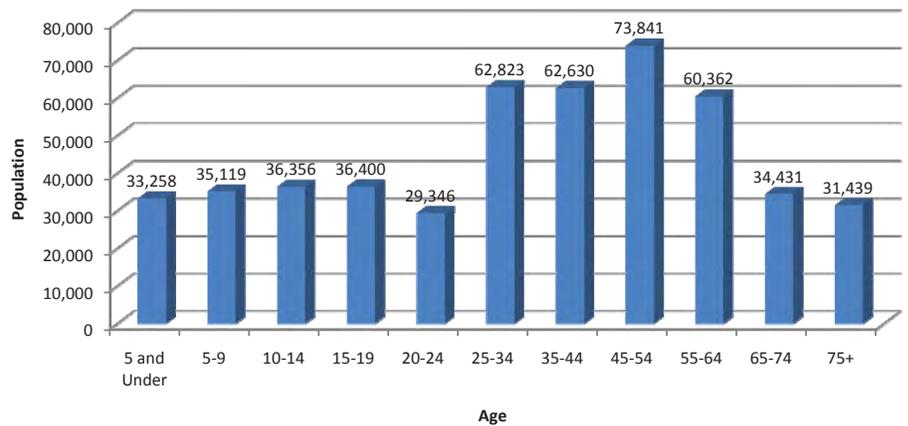
#### Disability

According to the 2008 – 2012 American Community Survey, 13.7% of Lake County’s population has a disability, slightly higher than that of the State of Indiana (12.7%). A disability is defined as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition that impedes a person from being able to go to work or go outside the home unassisted. Disabilities make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. Because of these effects, persons with disabilities may need special accommodations.

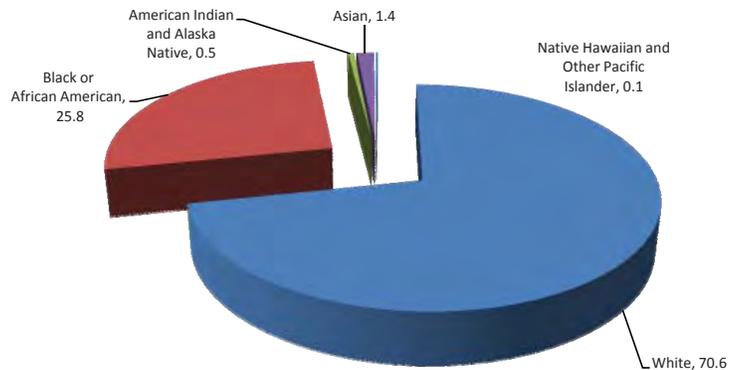
#### Educational Attainment

The 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates indicates the number of adults living within Lake County who are a high school graduate or higher is 86.7%. Approximately 19.7% have obtained a bachelor’s

### Population by Age



### Race Distribution



degree or higher. This is comparable to the State of Indiana, of which 87 percent of the population is a high school graduate or higher and 23 percent has a bachelor's degree or higher.

The administration of public schools in Lake County is divided among 16 corporations and governing bodies, more than any other Indiana county. These school corporations include the following:

- Crown Point Community School Corporation;
- Gary Community School Corporation;
- Griffith Public Schools;
- Hanover Community School Corporation;
- Lake Central School Corporation;
- Lake Ridge Schools Corporation;
- Lake Station Community Schools;
- Merrillville Community School Corporation;
- River Forest Community School Corporation;
- School City of East Chicago;
- School City of Hammond;
- School City of Hobart;
- School City of Whiting;
- School Town of Highland;
- School Town of Munster;
- Tri-Creek School Corporation.

**Higher Education**

There are a variety of institutions which provide opportunities for technical education and fully accredited college degree programs located within Lake County, Indiana: Purdue University (Calumet Campus), Indiana University Northwest (Gary), Calumet College of St. Joseph, Ivy Tech Community College, ITT Technical Institute, Everest College and Indiana Wesleyan University.

**Employment and Unemployment**

The 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates indicate that 62.9% of the population 16 and older are in the labor force. Of the approximately 240,961 people in the labor force, only 7% are unemployed.

The majority of the employed population in Lake County works in management, business, science, and arts occupations (29.7%). Sales and office occupations account for 24.4%,

and service occupations account for 18%. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations account for 17% of occupations and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations account for the remainder of employed population (10.2%).

Jobs in manufacturing continue to decline in Lake County even with the reinvestment in the steel industry and revitalization of some areas of the industrial corridor along the Lake Michigan shore. Manufacturing still employs the second largest number of workers, with healthcare and education sectors employing the greatest numbers. Retail and hospitality services are the next largest employment sectors in Lake County, with a sector that includes the arts, entertainment, and recreation fields the next highest employment group. These sectors, which revolve around the casino and tourist trade, combine to provide the greatest increase in employment since the decline in the manufacturing sector that began in the late 1960s.

According to STATS, Indiana unemployment figures are decreasing in Lake County.

Year	Lake County	Indiana	Labor Force Total
2009	10.7%	10.3%	226,574
2010	11.0	10.0	221,290
2011	9.9	8.8	220,549
2012	9.5	8.1	220,312
2013	8.4*	7.5	219,790*

\*Through December 2013. Annual average not yet available.

**Largest Employers**

The following is a list of the largest employers located within Lake County, reported by company personnel. Other large employers include school corporations and municipal governments.

Name	Type of Business	Number of Employees
US Steel Corporation	Steel Processing and Fabricating	7,250
Community Hospital	Hospital	3,200
St. Margaret Mercy Healthcare	Hospital	2,860
Horseshoe Hammond	Casino	2,430
Methodist Hospitals	Hospital	2,410
Lake County	County Government	2,400
NiSource, Inc.	Public Utility	1,700
St. Anthony Medical Center	Hospital	1,500
Ameristar Casino/Hotel	Casino/Hotel	1,300
Whiteco Industries	Hotels/Entertainment	1,000
Buffington Harbor Riverboats	Casino/Hotel	1,000

at 10.5 percent. Of the occupied units in Lake County in 2010, 69.3% were owner-occupied and 30.7% were renter-occupied.

### Taxes

The assessed valuation of properties in Lake County for taxes payable in 2014 was \$20,614,809,425.00. The average assessed valuation for property taxes payable in 2014 is \$3.1886 for every \$100. Other Lake County taxes include the following:

- Retail Sales and Use Tax (7% on tangible personal property excluding food and prescription drugs);
- Individual Adjusted Gross Income (3.4% of earnings; \$1,000 annual exemption allowed for each taxpayer and \$1,500 annual exemption for each dependent);
- Local Option Income Tax (1% of earnings; certain Social Security benefits are excluded; \$1,000 annual exemption allowed for each taxpayer and \$1,500 annual exemption for each dependent);
- Lake County Economic Development Income Tax (0.25% of adjusted earnings)
- Lake County Public Safety Income Tax (0.25% of adjusted earnings);
- Excise Tax (Cigarettes are 99.5 cents per package; Gasoline is 18 cents per gallon; Diesel fuel is 16 cents per gallon);
- Automobile Tax (Excise tax in lieu of personal property tax based on initial retail price range and age of vehicle).

### Income

The 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates show that the median household income of Lake County is \$49,315. Approximately 19% of households in Lake County have a household income between \$50,000 and \$74,999. The second largest group has a household income between \$35,000 and \$49,999, representing nearly 13.9% of households. The third largest group has a household income of \$75,000 to \$99,999, representing 12.8% of the households in Lake County. The primary source of household income is from earnings (76.2%). The second largest source is from social security income (31.2%), followed closely by retirement income (20.4%).

The 2008-2012 American Community Survey also estimates that Lake County has nearly 13.3% of families with income falling below the poverty level. This is slightly higher than the State of Indiana, where 10.6% of families have income falling below the poverty level.

### Housing

According to the 2010 US Census, there were a total of 208,750 housing units within Lake County. Approximately 90% percent of the housing units were occupied at the time of the Census, leaving a 10% vacancy rate. This number is comparable to the State of Indiana, which was





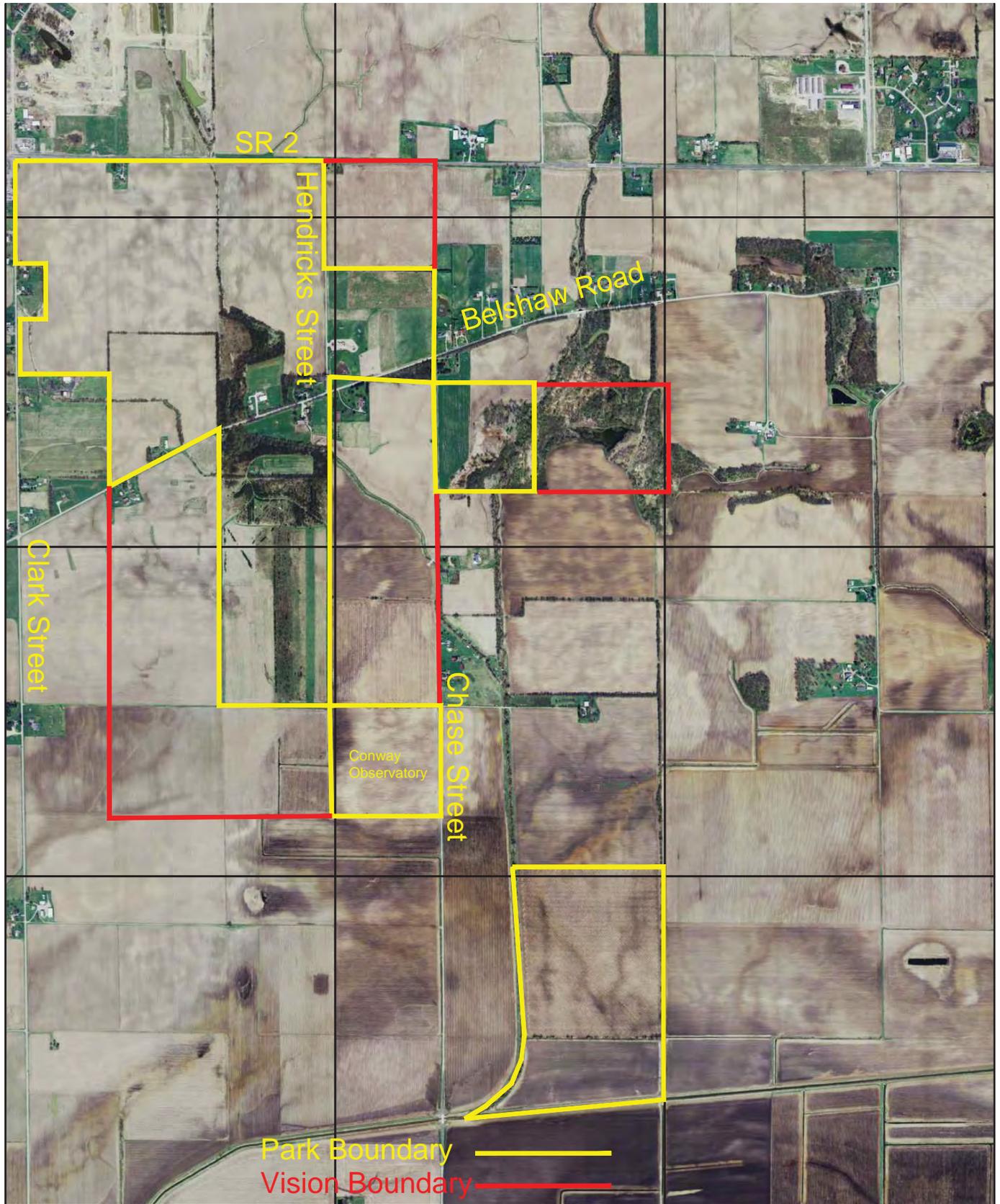
# CHAPTER 3

## CHAPTER THREE: SUPPLY ANALYSIS

Currently, approximately 6,189 acres of parks and recreation lands are managed by the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board. The following pages offer a detailed overview of the Lake County Parks and Recreation System.

In addition, other recreational opportunities available to the resident and visitors to Lake County have also been included in the supply analysis. Park and recreational opportunities on a regional scale were considered in this analysis.

The supply analysis identifies the existing recreation sources, open space, facilities, and programs currently available to the residents and visitors to Lake County. The analysis includes all the resources offered by the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department and all other major private and public organizations in the county.



*The Buckley Homestead Living History Farm is a 587 acre park located in southern Lake County.*

# BUCKLEY HOMESTEAD LIVING HISTORY FARM

3606 Belshaw Road, Lowell, Indiana 46356

587.19 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.283566,-87.377509 (Visitor's Center Parking Lot)

## Park Description

When Dennis and Catherine Buckley first settled in Northwest Indiana in 1849 they would never have imagined that their farmstead would one day be of interest to visitors one hundred and fifty plus years into the future. The Buckley's were immigrants who fled Ireland during the Potato Famine with their four children. In 1977, part of the homestead was donated by Rose Buckley Pearce, great granddaughter of Dennis and Catherine, to the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department so that park visitors could experience the sights, sounds, and smells of early farm life through a living history outdoor museum. Later, upon her passing, Mrs. Pearce's estate donated the remaining acres to the park department. The Buckley Homestead had remained in family ownership continually from the middle 1800s until donated to the park department in 1977. The historic traditions, culture, and heritage of farming life during the 19th and early 20th centuries continue to be kept alive on this living history farm. Buckley represents three historical time periods; 1910s farmhouse and barn, a turn of the century schoolhouse, and 1850s era pioneer farm. A self-guided trail directs visitors through each of these three historic settings when interpreters are not available.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To preserve the rural heritage of southern Lake County, Indiana;
- To preserve historical properties and facilities with primary emphasis on those listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- To provide passive and active recreational experiences;
- To promote educational experiences through historical interpretation utilizing historical buildings and artifacts;
- To develop support facilities that would limit crossing public roads;
- To develop support facilities to better serve senior citizens and bus tours;

- To develop facilities and programs focusing on the dairy operation during the years the Buckley family dairy-farmed, and to incorporate cultural and social changes of the movement from small family farms to large-scale farm operations.

## Current Programs

The main house museum and supporting historical buildings serve as the perfect setting for programs like basket workshops, historical doll displays, sheep shearing, weaving, spinning, and farm-related activities like threshing. Special events like the annual Fall Festival in October bring both residents and visitors to the farmstead. The popular Legend of Sleepy Hollow combines visitor participation in the theater-like performances. Traditional programs include the ever-popular school group educational tours that primarily focus on Indiana history utilizing the 1850's pioneer log farm, the turn-of-the-century one room schoolhouse, and the 1910 barn and farmyard. Daylong Hands-On Pioneer Experiences where school groups "work on the farm" are booked to capacity. Winter does not mean closing the park. Instead, horse-drawn bobsled rides are offered in January and February when snow and ice conditions permit. Non-historic programs include the Buckley 5 Miler running race co-hosted by the Lowell Park Department. This combination of hard surface cross-country race was voted best new race by the Calumet Striders in its second year.



*Traditional programs at Buckley include pioneer experiences and tours that focus on Indiana history.*



*In addition to the nine-hole golf course, Cedar Creek offers a driving range and miniature golf course.*



*Cedar Creek Golf Course, a nine-hole executive course, was acquired in 2005.*

# CEDAR CREEK FAMILY GOLF CENTER

10483 West 109th Avenue, Cedar Lake, Indiana 46303

87.84 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.420964,-87.460552

## Park Description

In 2005, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department acquired the Cedar Creek Family Golf Center at a time when more and more golf courses were being sold for development. This short course is used for instructional purposes, with special interest on youth instruction. It is also popular with beginner golfers and for those who no longer wish to play on a long course like Turkey Creek.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To provide a golf course friendly to beginners and those who are no longer able or wish to play a long course;
- To provide recreational opportunities and revenue generation by programming the mini golf course and promoting birthday parties and other uses of the party room;
- To develop programming that attracts small businesses to utilize the facilities.



## Current Programs

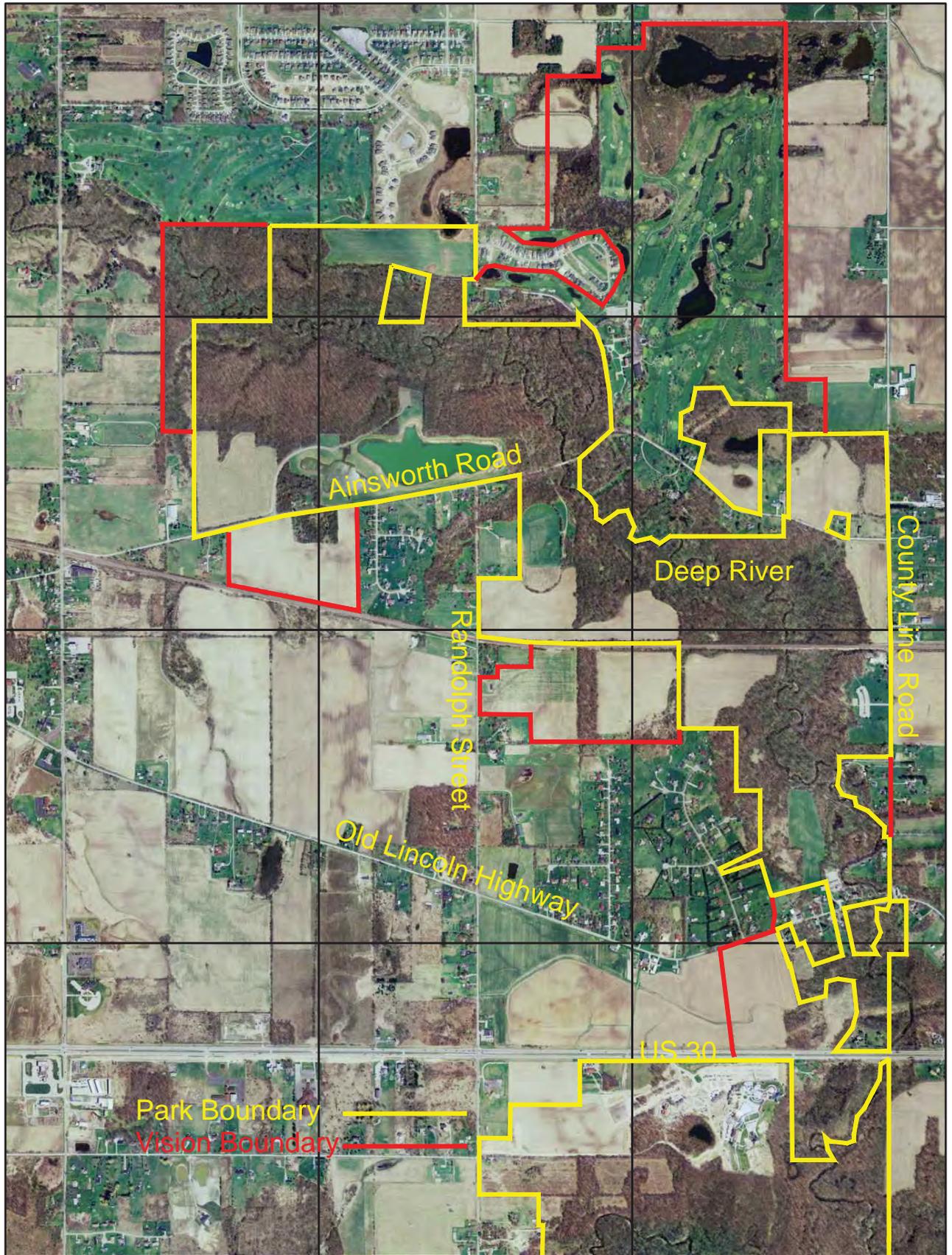
The lighted driving range with more than 15,000 square feet of bluegrass tees and 20 artificial “golfer friendly” turf mats can accommodate about 50 golfers at one time. The nine-hole executive course consists of five par 3’s and four par 4’s for a length of 1,742 yards from the white tees and 1,606 from the red tees for a par of 31.

The mini golf course is an 18-hole adventure style miniature golf course which allows all members of the family to get into the action. The mini-golf course is used for group activities, birthday parties, and family outings. Lighting is available for nighttime play.

During the month of October, the clubhouse and the mini golf course are decorated in a Halloween theme. Many groups take advantage of the festive atmosphere to host their parties.



*The lighted driving range at Cedar Creek can accommodate about 50 golfers at one time.*



*Deep River County Park is located just north of US 30 in Hobart, Indiana.*

# DEEP RIVER COUNTY PARK - NORTH

9410 Old Lincoln Highway, Hobart, Indiana 46342

631.40 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.475944,-87.222285 (Deep River Wood's Historic Grist Mill);  
41.483097,-87.22008 (Deep River County Line Road Picnic Area)

## Park Description

The tremendous natural and historic resources at Deep River County Park allow for a varied and expanded program scope. Wood's Historic Grist Mill and the surrounding area provide the perfect setting to host hundreds of school groups from May through October. Special programs, like Maple Syrup in March, provide educational programs for both reserved groups and the public in general at a time when the historic buildings would not ordinarily be open. Many programs are designed for youngsters ranging from preschool age through middle school. Others, like leaf identification workshops, night hikes, perennial plant swaps, tree pruning workshops, and visits to the greenhouses are especially appreciated by those looking for a connection to nature. The arts are also an important feature of programming at Deep River County Park. The third floor of the grist mill houses art exhibits throughout the season and several friendship quilts sewn by staff and volunteers since 1979 are on display. Deep River staff hosts monthly photography club meetings. While the programming scope changes from year to year, traditional activities like non-reserved hayrides and Campfire Chillers remain exceptionally popular. Highlighting the epitome of historical interpretation in the form of "living history" are the Deep River Grinders, a vintage baseball club nine player team that draws competitors and fans from a four-state area. A short distance away, Deep River Waterpark, part of the Deep River County Park campus, is a full-service family water facility that functions as its own program seasonally.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To develop and operate an urban recreational destination utilizing the natural resources of Deep River County Park and the surrounding topography, which includes Wood's Historic Grist Mill and support buildings, miles of

trails, County Line picnic grove, Big Maple Lake, and Deep River Waterpark;

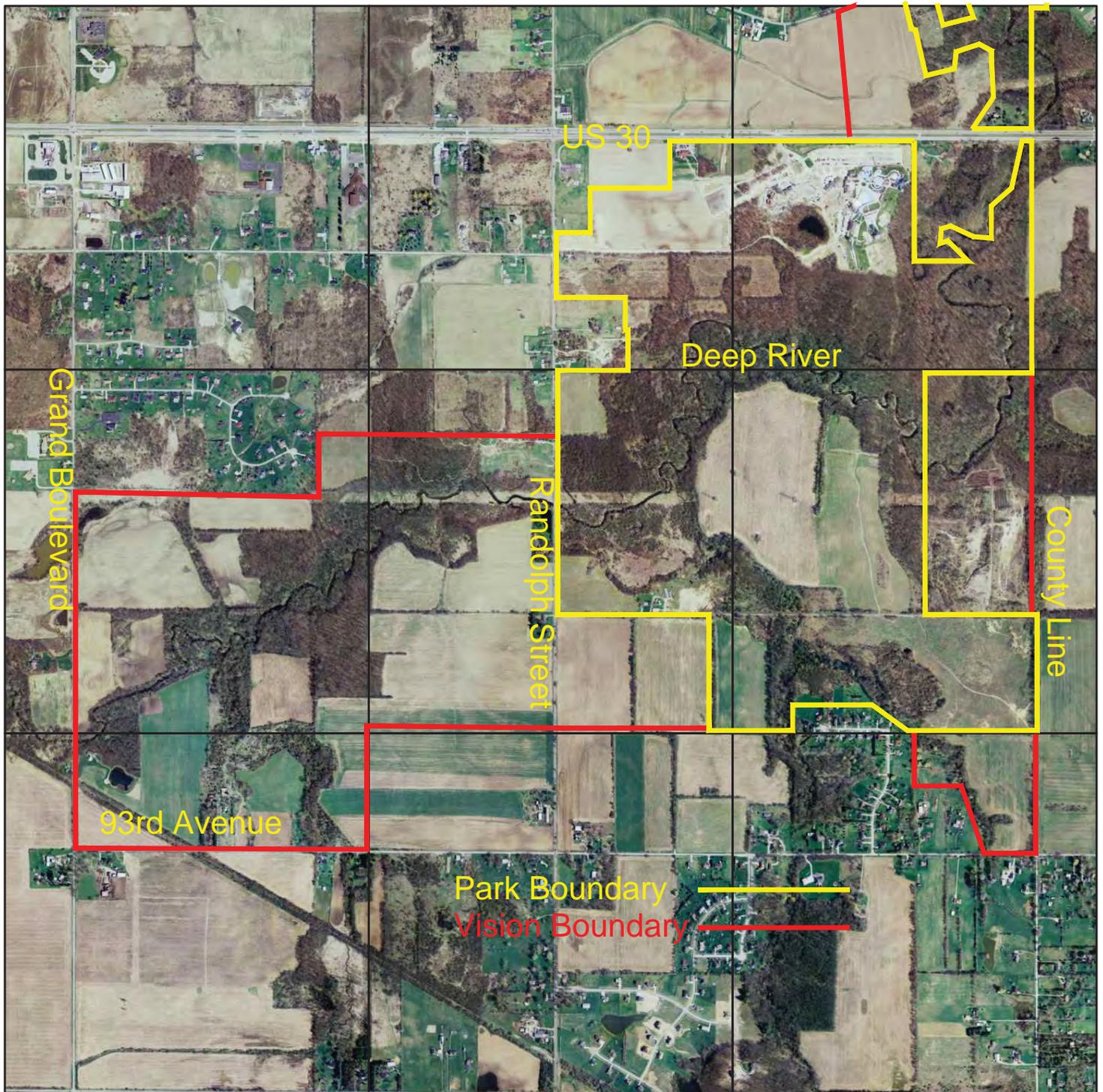
- To present an historical overview of early Lake County industry using Wood's Historic Grist Mill as the centerpiece of educational programming designed around STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) concepts;
- To preserve historical properties and facilities with primary emphasis on those listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Current Programs

Deep River County Park provides a number of passive and active recreation opportunities, including shelter rentals, a wedding gazebo, gardens, picnicking, volleyball, horseshoe pits, and trails. Programs and activities are scheduled at Wood's Historic Grist Mill and Visitor Center, Saw Mill, Sugar Shack, and the Grinder baseball field. Other programs include reserved school group field trips, weekend special programs, and the Lake County Parks photography club. Horseback riding is also accessible from the County Line or Sulky Track areas.



*Deep River County Park offers unique programming, such as the Maple Syrup program in March and vintage baseball.*



*Deep River Waterpark is located south of US 30 in Crown Point, Indiana and is also home to the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department's corporate campus.*

# DEEP RIVER COUNTY PARK - SOUTH

9001 East US Route 30, Crown Point, Indiana 46307

585.95 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.47063,-87.230138

## Park Description

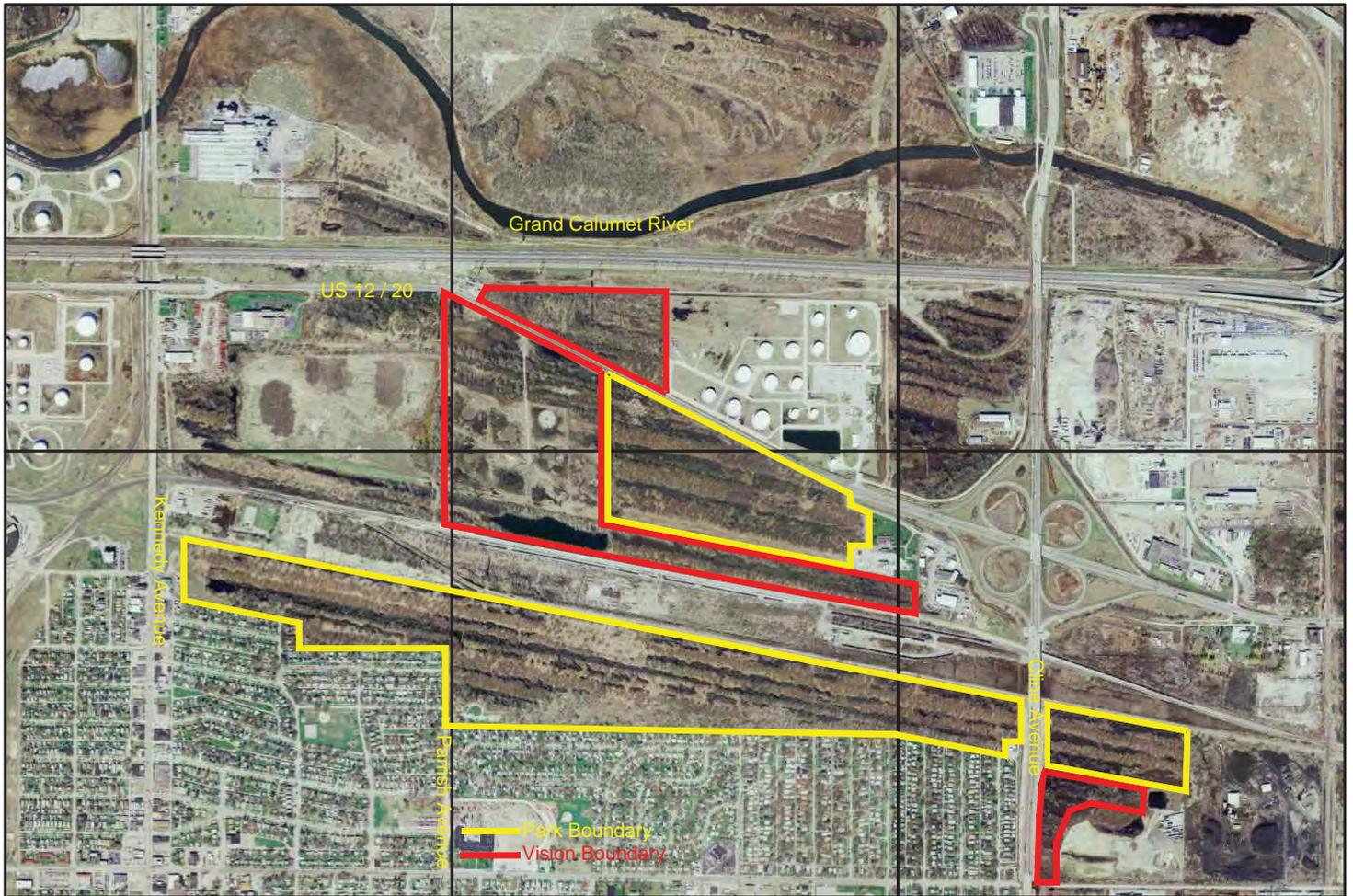
Attracting approximately 250,000 visitors a year, Deep River Waterpark is a destination resort facility that attracts regular visitors from Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan due to its easy accessibility and expansive family features. The park includes twelve waterslides and two river rides in addition to a wave pool and a variety of other water features. There are areas designed specifically for young children as well as a birthday party area, café, volleyball courts, and a gift shop. The surfside café offers a nice quiet respite from the active areas of the park. The grounds are beautifully landscaped and well-maintained, making the park one of the best water parks in the entire region. There are numerous concessionaires providing a variety of food and drink. From the day after Thanksgiving through the last Sunday in February the ice skating plaza is open for public skating and reserved groups. Special programs include the annual Snowflake Skate for girls and their dolls and the Lake County Parks Cooperative Special Recreation Initiative's skating party for families with special needs. The park is the largest revenue-generating facility for the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department and employs more than 425 people annually. There is enough land area to undertake continued expansion as demand increases and resources are available.

## Current Programs

The Waterpark is one large daily program. Special offerings include American Red Cross Learn to Swim Lessons, the American Red Cross Youth Guard Start Program, and participation in the World Waterpark Association's World's Largest Swimming Lesson.



*Deep River Waterpark provides programming during both the summer and winter months.*



*Gibson Woods and Tolleston Ridge are state dedicated nature preserves that are owned and operated by the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department.*

# GIBSON WOODS/TOLLESTON RIDGES NATURE PRESERVES

6201 Parrish Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46323

222.68 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.599352,-87.45186

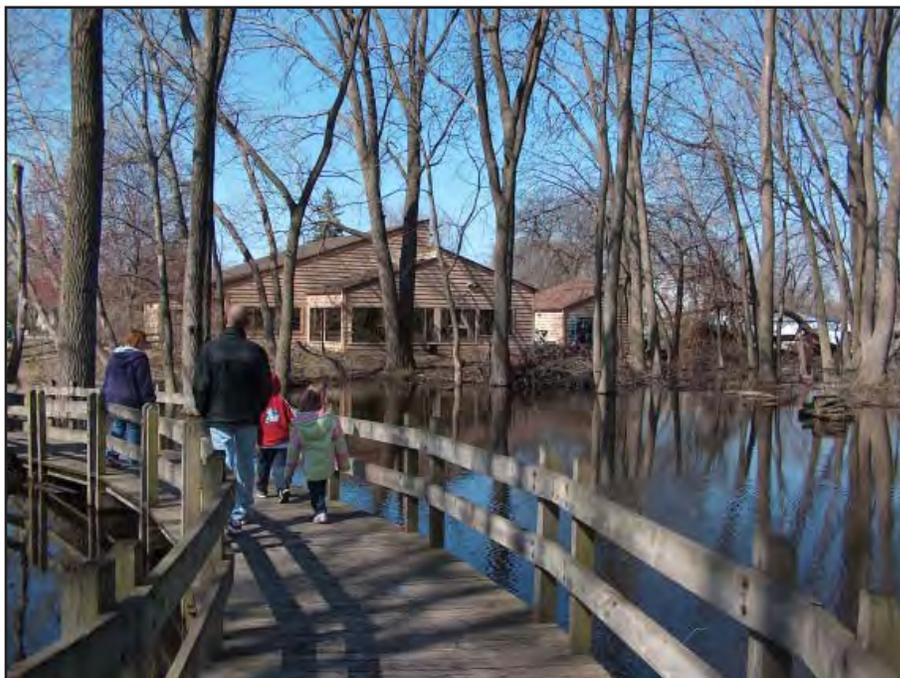
## Park Description

While owned and operated by the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department, Gibson Woods and Tolleston Ridges are both state dedicated nature preserves due to the rare plants and animals found at these sites, some of which are listed as endangered and/or threatened species. This tract is a remnant of the very rare “dune and swale” topography formed thousands of years ago during the retreat of glacial Lake Chicago. Outside of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, it contains the longest un-dissected dune ridge in Indiana.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To preserve the rare dune and swale topography of the park and to promote environmental awareness through a variety of educational programs.

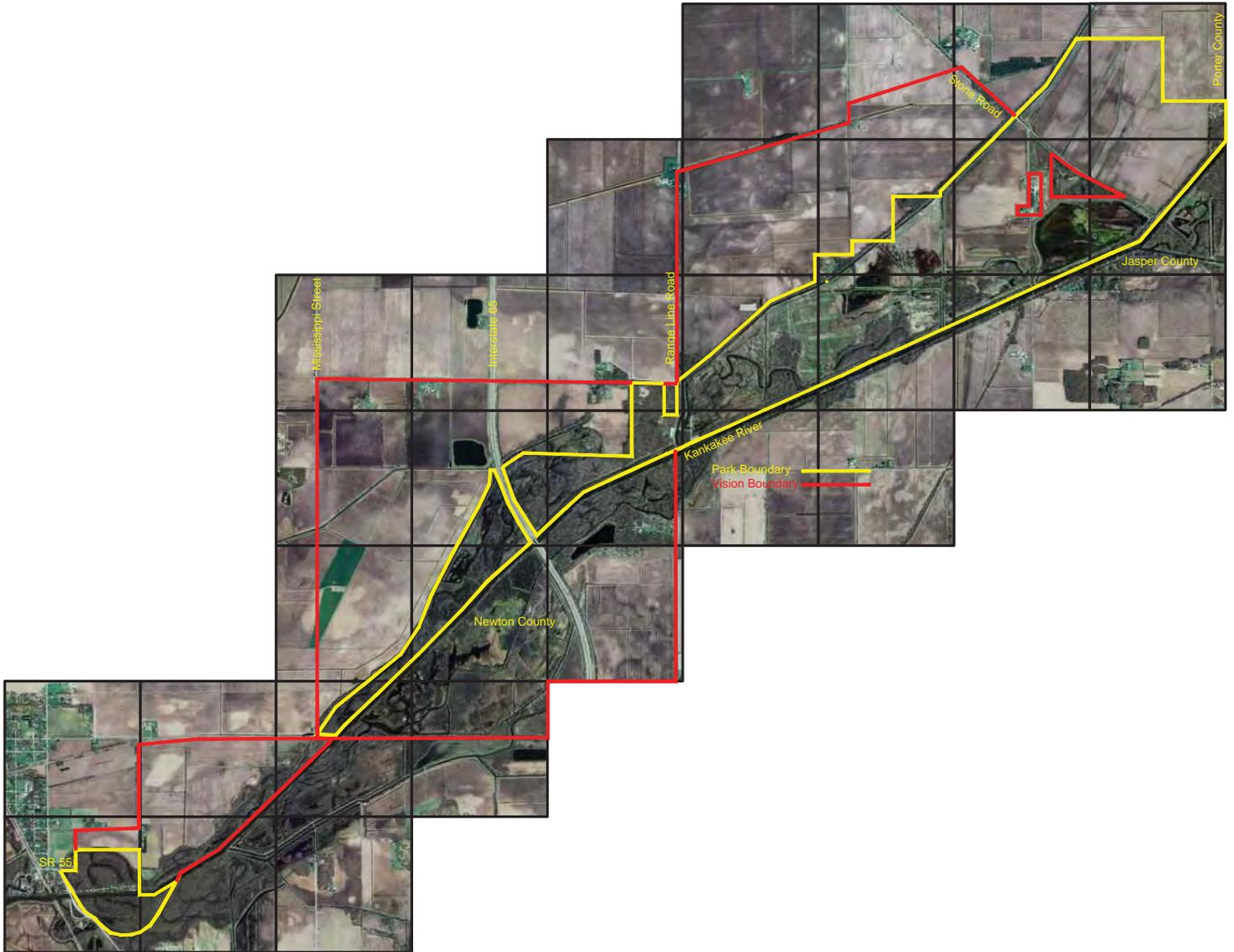


## Current Programs

Programs at the park include topics focused on its ecology and historical development. The Environmental Awareness Center features park-related exhibits such as an 8,000 year-old mastodon skeleton found in Lake County, live reptiles and amphibians, and educational displays. The wildlife viewing room remains one of the most popular locations in the Center. Educational experiences include an indoor program combined with a hike into the dune and swale prairie. Programs are designed to fit the age and need of the school or other group. Nature programs like bird and wildflower walks are held throughout the year. Wild Ones Natural Landscapers, sponsored by the Lake County Parks Department, is an active volunteer group who assists in seed collection, cleaning, growing, and replanting. The popular Wild Ones Native Plant sale raises funds to support needs at the preserve. Birding 101 is a six-week series of workshops co-sponsored with the Dunes Calumet Audubon Society. Dozens of other programs are offered at Gibson Woods throughout the year.



*Programs at Gibson Woods and Tolleston Ridges focus on ecology and historical development.*



*The Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park stretches along the Lake County/Newton County border and encompasses nearly 2,000 acres.*

# GRAND KANKAKEE MARSH COUNTY PARK

21690 Range Line Road, Hebron, Indiana 46341

1,952.27 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.220505,-87.276058

## Park Description

Located along the historic Kankakee River, the park is dynamically affected by seasonal flooding. This, along with different natural communities, provides ideal feeding in the fields for a variety of wildlife. Densely wooded areas and the remnants of old river channels provide excellent habitat for large deer herds, many species of ducks, and other wildlife. The Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park was acquired in 1977 with assistance from The Nature Conservancy. Through the years the marsh has been developed and managed for wildlife as well as public use. The careful management and regulation of hunting seasons has helped to make this property a noteworthy hunting area.



## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To promote preservation and conservation of natural areas through habitat creation and restoration, flood retention, wildlife observation, and hunter education programming.

## Current Programs

Hunting, fishing, wildlife, and bird viewing make up the majority of recreation opportunities at the marsh. The levees are also heavily used as bridle trails. For the past 30 years, the park has been the site of the annual Voyageur Rendezvous, a living history reenactment of the early French fur trade era that presents educational information in a colorful family-friendly atmosphere.



*Programming at the Marsh includes the annual Voyageur Rendezvous.*



Lake Etta County Park is located in Gary, Indiana.

# LAKE ETTA COUNTY PARK

4801 West 29th Avenue, Gary, Indiana 46406

111.52 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.566095,-87.396653

## Park Description

Lake Etta County Park is a partnership between the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department and the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission. This multi-use park site is one of the busiest facilities in the system partly due to its proximity to a major highway and partly because of the variety of recreational opportunities it offers.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

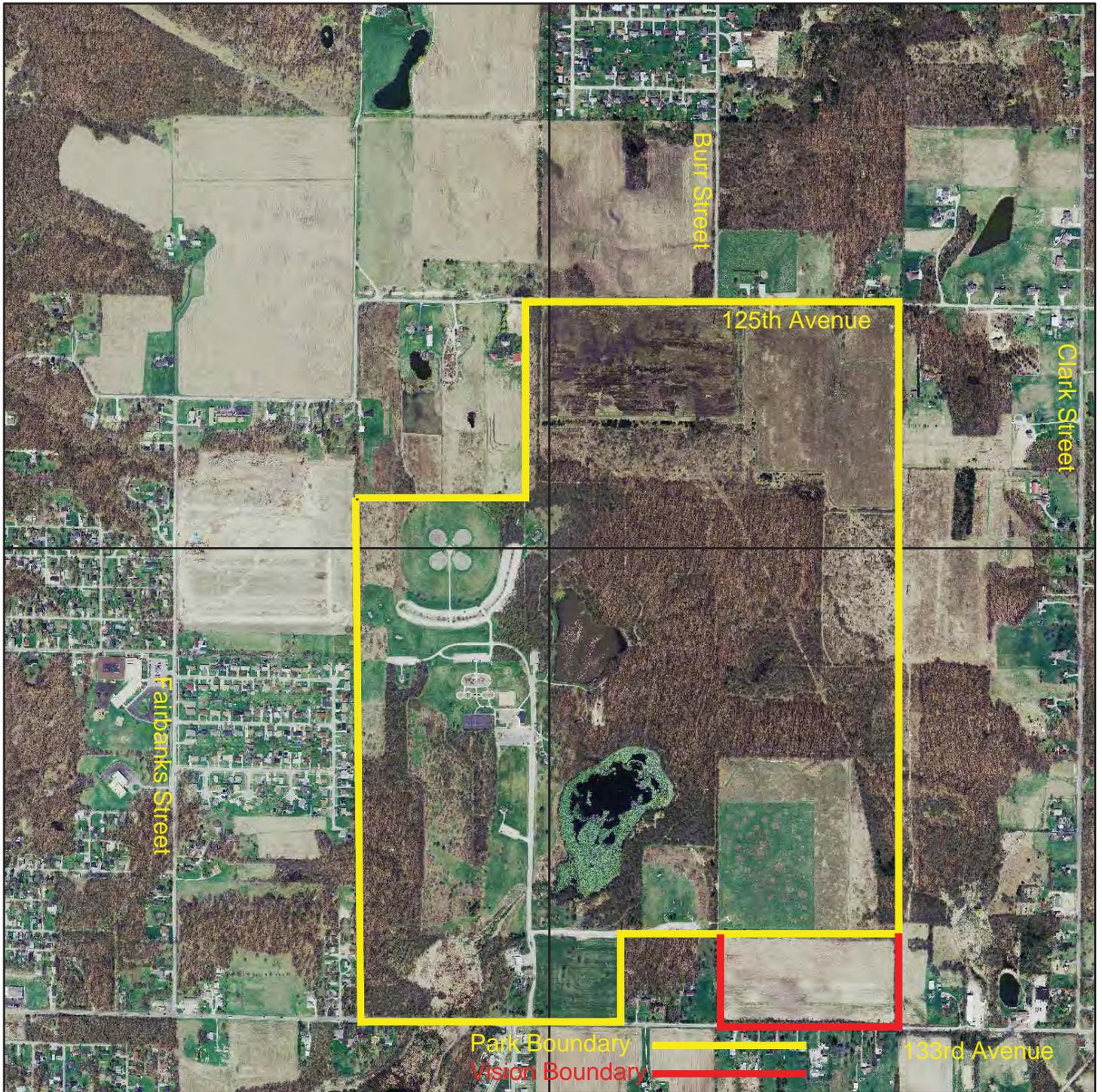
- To provide active and passive recreational opportunities within an urban park site;
- To promote natural resources along the Little Calumet River.

## Current Programs

Lake Etta offers a variety of facilities and activities, including a swimming beach, fishing, picnic shelters, volleyball standards, a handicapped accessible playground, a three-season enclosed shelter, a full-service catered banquet hall, and an adjoining wedding pergola. Various special programs such as the Korean and WWII War Veterans luncheon and the History Speaks Series are conducted in the Banquet Hall. G.O.A.L.S. (Go Outside and Learn Something) is a joint venture between the Lake County Purdue Extension Service, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Lake County Parks targeted at youth who have limited opportunity to experience the out-of-doors and help them to focus on healthy lifestyles.



*Lake Etta offers a variety of facilities, including a pond and fishing pier.*



*Lemon Lake, the very first county park, has grown to include 402 acres.*

# LEMON LAKE COUNTY PARK

6322 West 133rd Avenue, Crown Point, Indiana 46307

402.33 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.377023,-87.40723

## Park Description

At the 1972 March Park Board meeting, Lemon Lake County Park was named after the small marsh area that had historically been called by that name. Thus, Lemon Lake was the first Lake County Park opened to the public.

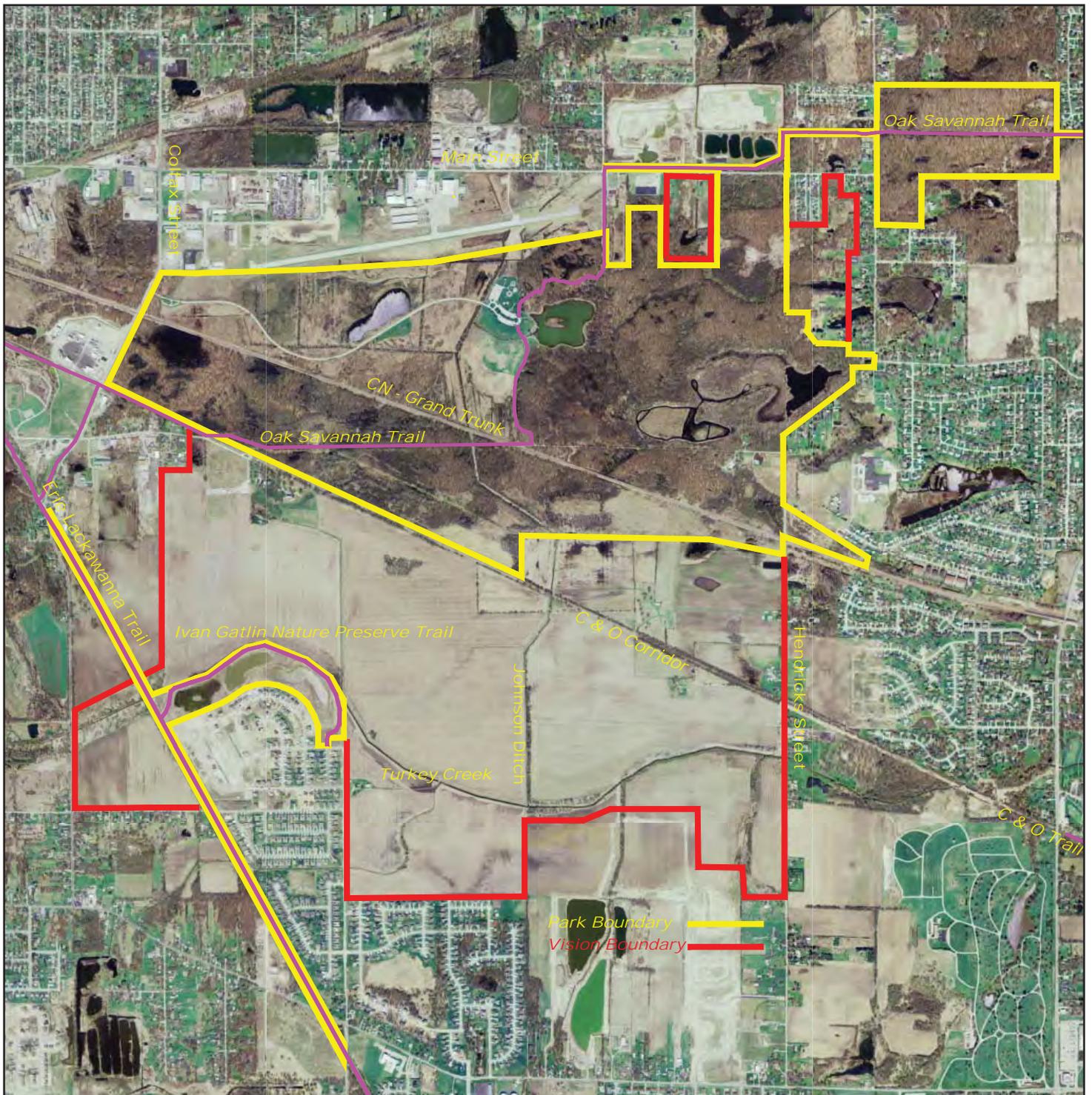
## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To provide a variety of active recreational activities and facilities throughout the year;
- To highlight the natural areas of the park through trail promotion and educational activities.

## Current Programs

Today, Lemon Lake County Park encompasses 403 acres of rolling hills and open space surrounded by wooded areas. A one-mile paved trail around the lake and more than five miles of primitive trails in hilly, wooded terrain provide a wonderful opportunity for a nature walk in the warmer months and cross country skiing in the winter. Lemon Lake County Park is more than passive recreation, however. It is home to softball fields, open play areas, a large creative playground, two sand volleyball courts, five 18-hole disc golf courses, fishing, picnicking, volleyball standards, and a 14 acre leash-free dog area.



Oak Ridge Prairie began as a truck farm and has evolved into 735 acres of restored prairie.

# OAK RIDGE PRAIRIE COUNTY PARK

301 South Colfax Street, Griffith, Indiana 46319

735.08 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.51769,-87.413623

## Park Description

Oak Ridge Prairie County Park had its humble beginnings as a truck farm. While much of the acreage on the west side of the park had been tilled, significant areas of Oak Ridge Prairie County Park are classified as pristine prairie. The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department, through a land-management plan which includes prairie plantings and prescribed burnings, has restored hundreds of acres of the prairie.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To preserve existing significant natural areas and to restore designated disturbed areas;
- To utilize open space for passive and active recreational activities;
- To serve as the trailhead for the Oak Savannah Trail, a cross-country hiking and biking trail;
- To serve as a linking connector between the Erie Lackawanna and the Oak Savannah Trails.

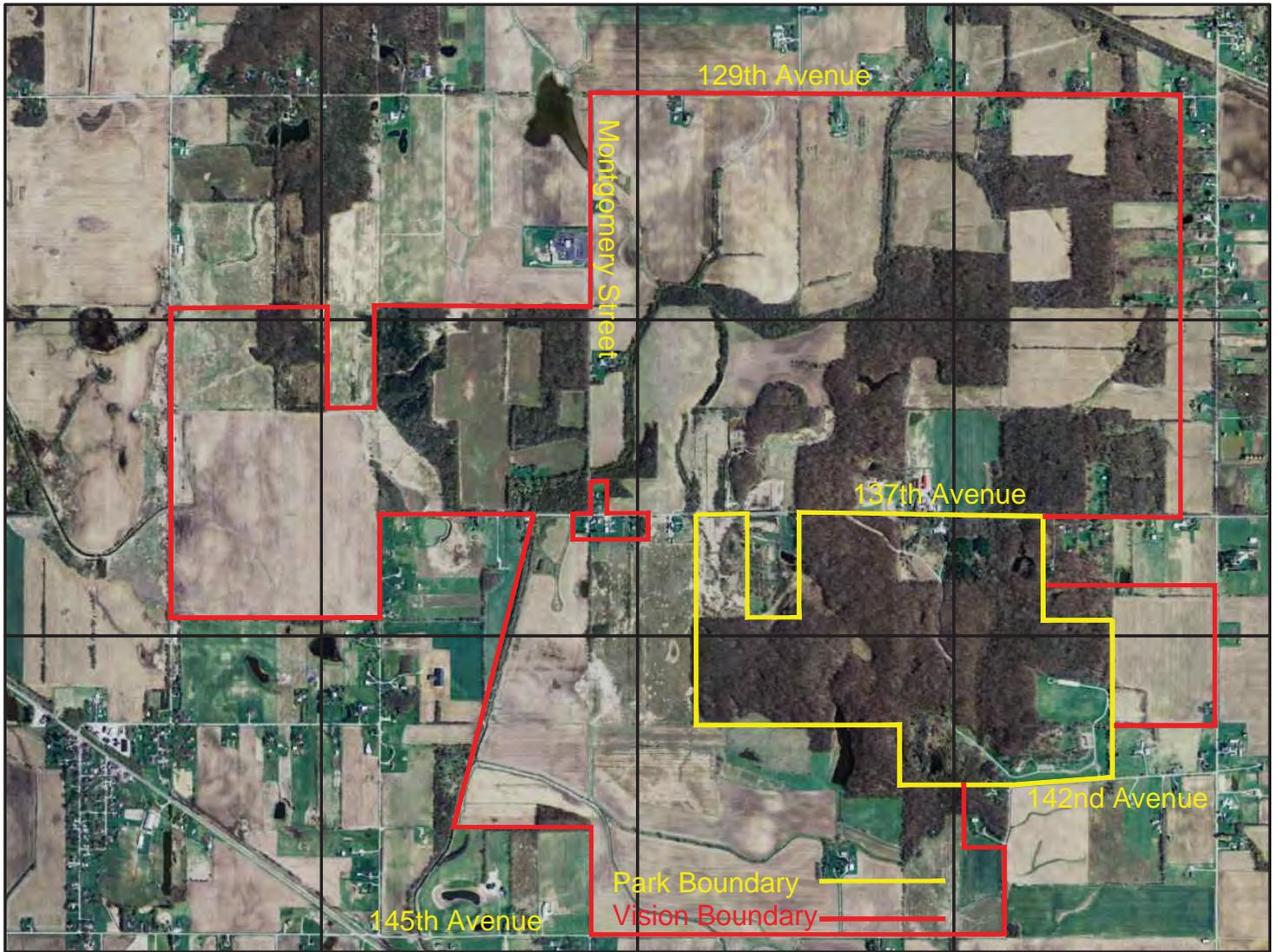
## Current Programs

Oak Ridge Prairie County Park offers a variety of year-round activities, including a sledding hill and cross-country ski rentals in the winter, hayrides in the fall, and picnicking, playgrounds, volleyball, open play fields, and fishing in the spring and summer. The stocked fishing lake provides fishing from spring to November. The passive recreation aspects of Oak Ridge Prairie provide an excellent opportunity for bird and nature hikes as well as other educational activities. Special programs include the annual Woodcock Watch in the spring. In addition to the regular hayrides offered in September and October, Oak Ridge Prairie, through use of a specially designed handicap accessible ramp system and a custom locking mechanisms, is able to offer hayrides where participants remain in their wheelchair. The Lake County Parks, along with several other park and recreation department and volunteer

organizations, is a member of the Cooperative Special Recreation Initiative (CSRI) dedicated to offering recreational opportunities to families with special needs.



*Oak Ridge Prairie offers year-round activities, including playgrounds and sledding.*



*Stoney Run County Park, located in Hebron, Indiana, is approximately 306 acres in size.*

# STONEY RUN COUNTY PARK

9230 East 142nd Avenue, Hebron, Indiana 46341

316.80 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.359999,-87.225063

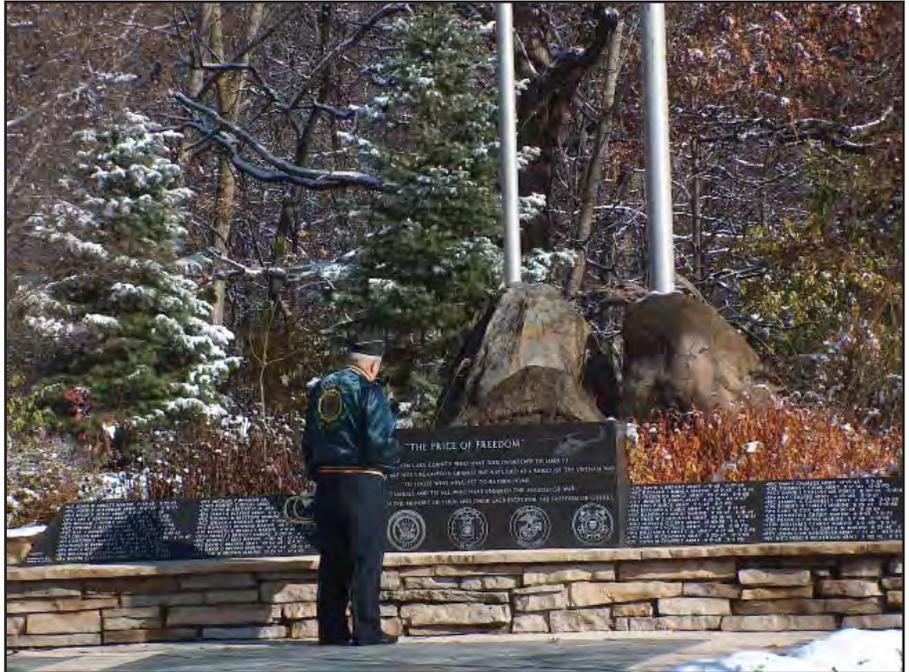
## Park Description

The great interior trails in the park provide a quiet opportunity for walking, hiking, or skiing in the winter. The perimeter trail provides an opportunity for equestrians to experience the beauty of this rural park site. It is the only park in the system where overnight group camping is permitted. A major attraction at the park is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, one of the oldest publicly owned monuments dedicated to Vietnam Veterans. Volunteers host annual Memorial Day services in May and a Veterans Recognition Service on the Saturday prior to Veteran's Day in November.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To provide a variety of recreational opportunities, including overnight camping for not-for-profit reserved groups;
- To promote recognition of veterans at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

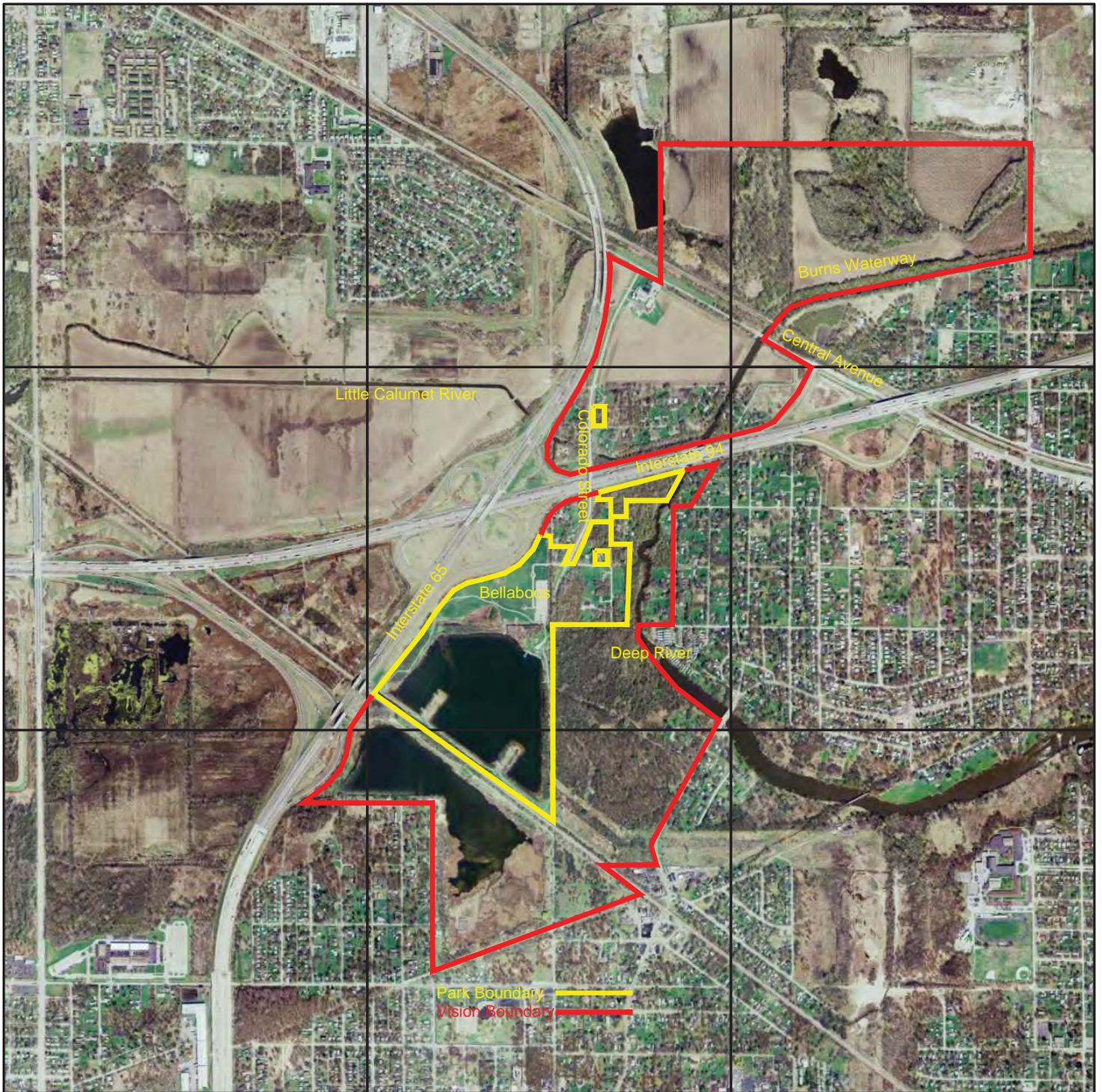


## Current Programs

A variety of recreational opportunities are available at Stoney Run County Park, including primitive group camping, picnic shelters, barbecue facilities, volleyball standards, a creative playground, fishing, horseback riding on the perimeter trail, cross-country ski rentals in the winter, services at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and geocaching.



*Stoney Run County Park offers both passive and active recreational opportunities.*



*Three Rivers County Park is a highly-visible park located at the intersection of Interstate 65 and Interstate 94 in Lake Station, Indiana.*

# THREE RIVERS COUNTY PARK

2600 Nevada Street, Lake Station, Indiana 46405

95.32 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.567336,-87.297520 (Entrance Sign)

## Park Description

Because of its proximity to major highways and its high visibility from the roadways, Bellaboo's Play and Discovery Center within Three Rivers County Park attracts the interest of passersby who are unaware of the special facility within the park site. The lake, trail, and surrounding areas remain active for general park visitors.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

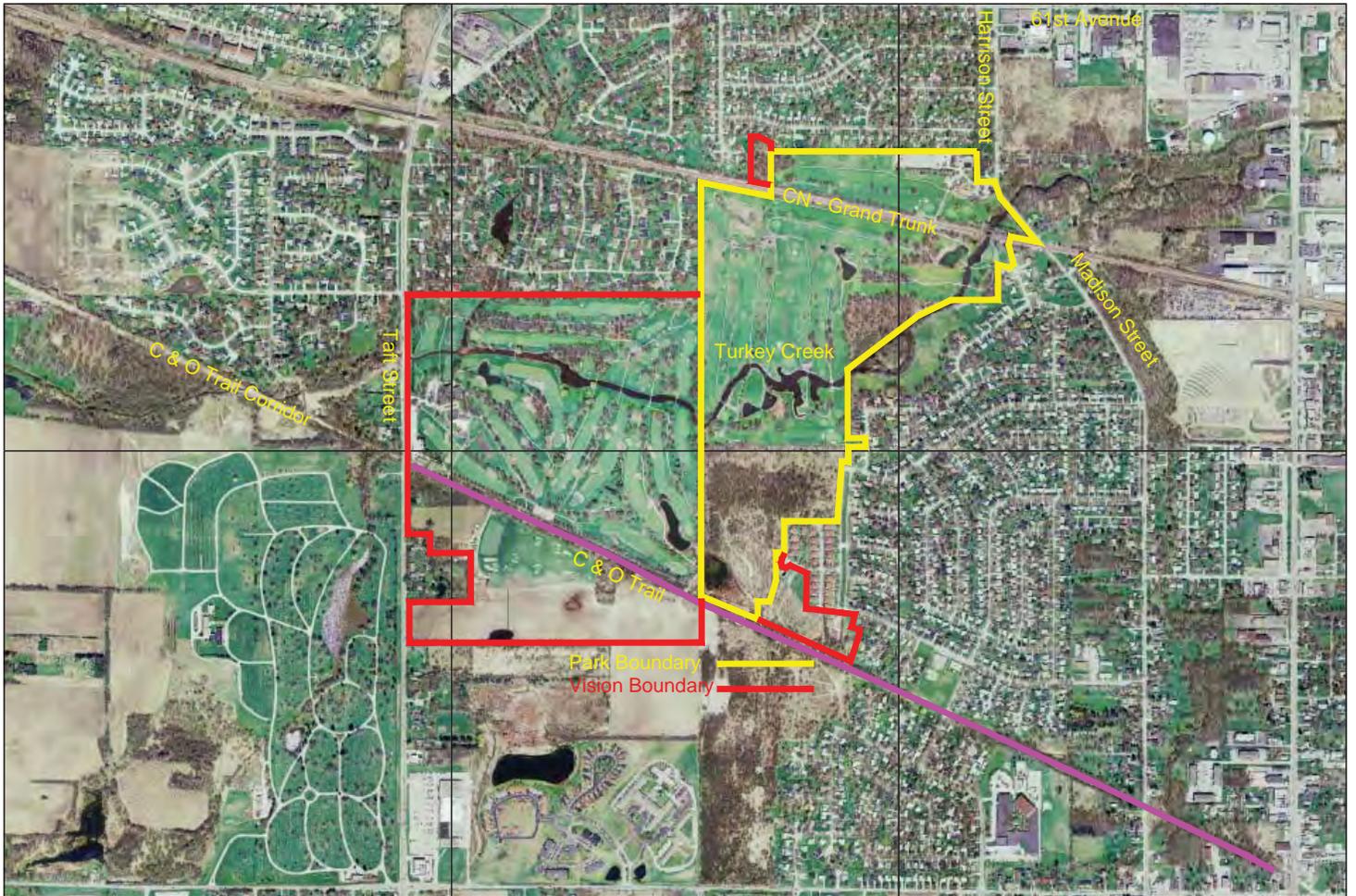
- To develop a varied passive and active recreational program in an urban park utilizing the resources of the lake and Deep River;
- To provide an opportunity specifically designed for children ages nine and younger leading to early learning experiences through play.



*Bellaboo's Play and Discovery Center opened in 2009 and is designed for children from infancy through age 9.*

## Current Programs

Bellaboo's Play and Discovery Center is designed especially for children from infancy through age nine, fitting play apparatus and facilities to appropriate sizes utilizing universal-design concepts. The colorful and imaginative center features 23,000 square feet of indoor hands-on activities with adjoining outdoor play areas. Self-guided play in child-sized supermarket, construction zone, and pizza parlor, for example, provide areas for children not only to interact with others, but to participate in dramatic play that stimulates intellectual growth. Additional elements include block play, do-it-yourself face painting, an art studio, dress-up, water tables, soft-contained play equipment, a reading room, children's do-it-yourself cooking, a performance area, and space just for infants and toddlers with developmentally-appropriate play activities. Separate from Bellaboo's are fishing, picnicking, and a hard surface walking trail open to the public.



*Turkey Creek Golf Course is located in Merrillville, Indiana, and offers 18-holes of golf.*

# TURKEY CREEK GOLF COURSE

6400 Harrison Street, Merrillville, Indiana 46410

148.48 Acres

GPS Coordinates: 41.502877,-87.345754

## Park Description

Turkey Creek is an 18-hole championship golf course with a pro shop, bar and clubhouse, food concession, and full-service catered banquet hall. The course rents electric golf carts and has an on-site cart and grounds maintenance facility.

## Park Site Objectives

Park site objectives include the following:

- To operate a public golf course designed to challenge low-handicapped golfers while introducing new golfers to the sport.

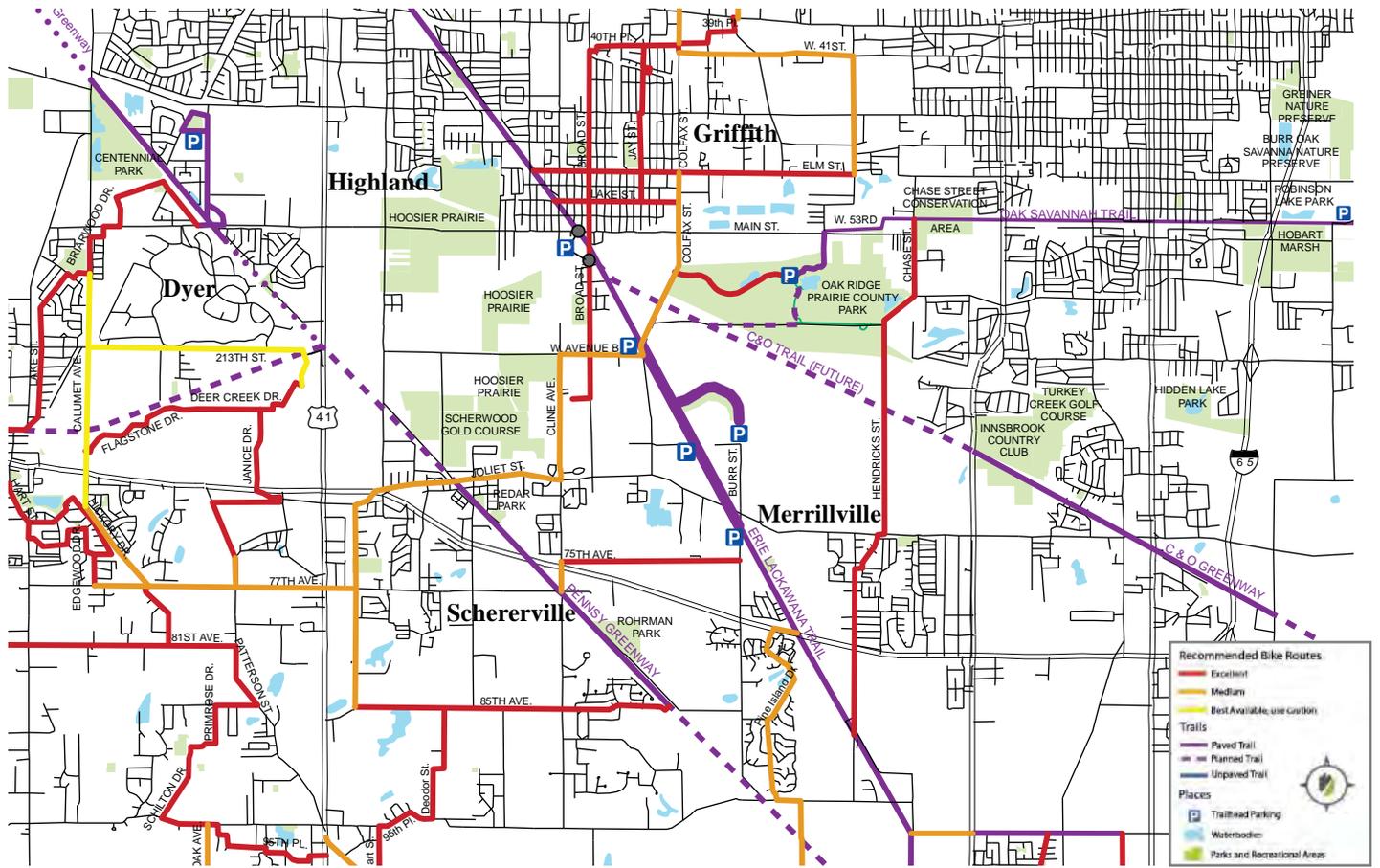
## Current Programs

Current programs at Turkey Creek Golf Course include golf and banquets.



*In addition to the golf course, Turkey Creek offers a pro-shop, bar, clubhouse, and banquet hall.*

## ERIE LACKAWANNA TRAIL & VICINITY MAP



The Erie-Lackawanna Trail is approximately 18 miles in length and connects several Lake County communities.

## OAK SAVANNAH TRAIL & VICINITY MAP



The Oak Savannah Trail is approximately 10 miles in length and stretches from the Oak Ridge Prairie County Park to the Town of Hobart.

## ERIE LACKAWANNA TRAIL

18 Acres; 17.9 Miles

### Trail Description

The Erie Lackawanna Trail begins at the Grand Calumet River in Hammond near the Sibley Street crossing of the Norfolk & Southern Railroad and ends near Summit Street in Crown Point. The Erie Lackawanna Bike Trail is a rails-to-trails project measuring 17.9 miles and passing through the municipalities of Hammond, Highland, Griffith, Schererville, and Crown Point. The trail can be used for hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, rollerblading, and is ADA accessible. The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department manages 1.5 miles of the trail. The Towns of Griffith and Schererville and the City of Hammond manage other sections.

In the north, the bituminous trail travels through neighborhoods, passes by several schools, through several old town centers, and crosses active railroads and multi-lane streets. In the south, the trail has a different character as it passes through tranquil fields, wetlands, and neighborhoods. The width of the property in this section allowed the trail to be designed in a slightly sinuous pattern.

## OAK SAVANNAH TRAIL

294.37 Acres; 10 Miles

### Trail Description

This multi-use trail begins at the Oak Ridge Prairie County Park in Griffith and extends north to former Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad right-of-way. The Oak Savannah Trail proceeds east, straddling the Gary/Merrillville border into Hobart at Wisconsin Street. The current gap in Hobart is expected to be constructed within the next few years. From Route 130, Oak Savannah Trail proceeds northeast and ends at County Line Road. Here the trail connects with the Prairie Duneland Trail which continues northeast through Porter County.

The Oak Savannah Trail is aptly named in that it passes through historically oak dominated savannahs that were maintained by periodic fires. Significant natural areas remain along the trail and are a huge asset to its character. The Oak Savannah Trail passes through Black Oak savannahs, remnant prairies, wetlands, the Hobart Prairie Grove Unit addition of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Lake George. This ten-mile trail is used by hikers, cyclists, cross-country skiers, rollerbladers, and is ADA accessible.



*Lake County Park patrons biking and rollerblading on the Erie-Lackawanna Trail.*

<b>Lake County Parks and Recreation System Summary Chart</b>		<b>Buckley Homestead Living History Farm</b>	<b>Cedar Creek Family Golf Center</b>	<b>Deep River County Park</b>	<b>Deep River Waterpark</b>	<b>Gibson Woods County Park</b>	<b>Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park</b>	<b>Lake Etta County Park</b>
	<i>Acreage</i>	587.19	87.84	631.40	585.95	222.68	1,952.27	111.52
Active Recreation Facilities	Camping (Group)							
	Cross Country Skiing							
	Disc Golf Course							
	Dog Park							
	Driving Range		x					
	Equestrian Trails			x			x	
	Farm Animals	x						
	Fishing						x	x
	Golf Course		x					
	Hay Rides	x		x				
	Hiking Trail	x		x		x		
	Hunting						x	
	Ice Skating				x			
	Miniature Golf Course		x					
	Playground			x				x
	Sledding Hill							
	Sleigh Rides	x						
	Softball Field							
	Swimming							x
	Trails (bicycling)							
Trails (walking)						x		
Volleyball Court								
Waterpark					x			
Passive Recreation Facilities	Historic Areas	x		x				
	Memorial							
	Natural Area Exhibits					x		
	Observatory	x						
	Picnic Areas			x	x	x	x	x
Recreation Support Facilities	Banquet Hall							x
	Boat Launch						x	
	Clubhouse		x					
	Concession Stand				x			
	Gazebo			x				
	Picnic Shelters	x		x	x		x	x
	Restrooms	x		x	x		x	x

Lemon Lake County Park	Oak Ridge Prairie County Park	Stoney Run County Park	Three Rivers County Park	Turkey Creek Golf Course	Erie Lackawanna Trail	Oak Savannah Trail
402.33	735.08	316.80	95.32	148.48	18	294.37
		x				
x	x					
x						
x						
x	x	x	x			
				x		
x	x	x				
x	x	x				
x	x					
	x					
x						
	x		x		x	x
x	x		x		x	x
x						
		x				
	x					
x	x	x	x			
				x		
				x		
x	x	x	x			
x	x	x		x		

## Other Recreational Opportunities

### *National Parks*

There is one national park in Lake County: the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. This national park hugs 15 miles of the southern shore of Lake Michigan and has much to offer. The 15,000 acre park has 45 miles of trails over rugged dunes, mysterious wetlands, sunny prairies, meandering rivers, and peaceful forests.

### *Indiana State Nature Preserves*

Hoosier Prairie in Schererville is a large remnant of the prairie landscape that was once common in northwest Indiana. This 1,547 acre site preserves the topographic and biotic diversity of the sand plains north of the Valparaiso Moraine. Plant diversity is exceptionally high here due to a wide range of moisture conditions. Sand rises support dry black oak savannas. Mesic sand prairie openings can be found on slopes between the rises and swales. Wet prairies, sedge meadows and marshes are scattered throughout the preserve in depressions and flats. Its size and plant diversity make Hoosier Prairie an excellent place to see native birds and other animals in their natural surroundings. Many of these animals are now rare in Indiana due to the disappearance of their native habitats. Prior to European settlement, fire was a normal part of prairie ecosystems. Fire killed the forest trees, but prairie plants were adapted to frequent fires and survived. When settlers suppressed wild fires, woody plants invaded the prairie. Now carefully controlled fires are used to maintain the prairie as it was before settlement.

McCloskey's Burr Oak Savanna Nature Preserve is 54.6 acres in size and located in Gary. Bur oak savannas once covered thousands of acres in northwestern Indiana, primarily on loamy soils. This natural community type is currently one of the rarest communities in the state. Former bur oak savannas still occur, primarily in Lake County around Crown Point and Hobart. Due to fire suppression over many decades, the open savanna aspect and their associated complement of prairie plants in the understory have been lost at nearly all these sites. McCloskey's Burr Oak Savanna protects bur oak savanna and tallgrass prairie habitats. Although it too is degraded, it offers great opportunities for restoration. This

site has pockets of prairie vegetation, and the reinstatement of fire is already showing results.

### *Municipal Parks*

There are several municipal parks systems available in Lake County. These parks satisfy the recreational needs of the immediate population, whether it is a town or city. The following cities in Lake County offer municipal park systems: Crown Point, East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Hobart, Lake Station, and Whiting. The following towns in Lake County offer municipal park systems: Cedar Lake, Dyer, Griffith, Highland, Lowell, Merrillville, Munster, New Chicago, Schererville, and St. John.

### *Shirley Heinze Land Trust Properties*

The Miller Dunes Nature Preserve is a 16 acre collection of small noncontiguous properties located in the Miller section of the City of Gary. The sites provide a good example of the diversity of habitats found in the "high dunes" region: dry oak forest, blowouts, interdunal wetlands, mesic interdunal coves, and ravines. The properties harbor rare plants.

The Bur Oak Woods Preserve is an 84 acre nature preserve is located in the City of Hobart. The preserve is an example of one of Indiana's rarest natural communities: the bur oak savanna. The property features mesic woodland areas and open sedge meadow. The property is a haven for birds and amphibians.

The Cressmoor Prairie in Hobart is the largest protected example of a silt-loam or "black soil" prairie in Indiana at 38 acres. Black soil prairies were once the most common prairies in Indiana. However, their rich, fertile soil was among the very finest agricultural ground anywhere in the world, so most were plowed under for farming. As a result, black soil prairies are exceedingly rare. Over 250 species of plants have been found at Cressmoor Prairie. Typical prairie species occurring here in great numbers include wild quinine, dense blazing star, rattlesnake master, prairie dock, and compass plant.

The Gordon and Faith Greiner Preserve is a 73 acre nature preserve located in the City of Hobart. It is characterized by a transitional landscape that ranges from black oak savanna to wet prairie

to swamp. The southern portion of the property was formerly used for agriculture and is currently being restored to prairie. Wetlands fed year-round by groundwater occur in the north end of the property and support a rich plant community that includes several sedges, wildflowers, and rare plants like poison sumac.

The Green Heron Pond Preserve is a 12 acre property located in the Miller section of the City of Gary. The diverse site features a range of habitats from interdunal wetland to high dune. Black oak savanna and woodland grade into mesic oak forest, providing habitat for numerous woodland and savanna wildflowers. The dominant wetland feature is a permanent pond which supports fish, frogs, turtles, muskrats, and waterfowl. Smaller seasonal ponds also occur at the site.

The Hidden Prairie and Ivory Preserve is a 61 acre property located in the City of Hobart. The preserve consists of two parcels bisected by railroad tracks. The northern portion is characterized by an ecotone that ranges from wet-mesic prairie to swamp to marsh to open water. The wetlands host great egrets, great blue herons, green herons, wood ducks, and other water birds. The southern half of the property is a large marsh under restoration. A short trail allows access to the northern half of the preserve; the southern portion is undeveloped for visitors.

Ivanhoe South Preserve is a 30 acre property located in the City of Gary. The site protects globally rare dune-and-swale topography. The black oak savanna and interdunal wetland communities provide habitat for a diverse variety of flora and fauna. A hiking trail begins at the parking lot on Colfax Street.

The Seidner Dune and Swale Nature Preserve is 43 acres in size and is located in Hammond. This preserve features “dune and swale” topography, with the associated wetlands and oak savanna, and a floodplain marsh along the Grand Calumet River. Over 250 species of plants have been identified on the site, including several rare species that have strict habitat requirements. Notable plants include wild lupine, harebell, fringed gentian, blue-flag iris, white wild indigo, side-oats grama grass, prairie lily, blazing star and many others. This portion of the site is

managed by the Shirley Heinze Land Trust to maintain biological diversity and to preserve the fire dependent communities that occur here.

### ***The Nature Conservancy***

The Nature Conservancy helps manages several sites in Lake County, including the German Methodist Cemetery Prairie is located near the Town of Lowell. The grand tallgrass prairie once covered most of northwest Indiana’s silt loam soils. These “black soil prairies” were extremely fertile and almost all of these prairies succumbed to agriculture. Fortunately all is not lost. The German Methodist Cemetery Prairie is the finest black soil prairie remnant in not only the state, but in all of the Midwest. It is also one of the most diverse sites in the state with over 200 species of native plants in it’s less than three acres.

Ivanhoe Dune and Swale Nature Preserve, located in Gary, is a remnant of a globally unique natural community known as “dune and swale,” formed as the ancient glacial Lake Chicago receded thousands of years ago. A series of linear sandy beach ridges alternate with long narrow wetlands in parallel bands to form this rare community, a total of 120 acres. Rapid and intense industrial and residential development of the lakeshore destroyed all but tiny fragments. Scattered black oaks dominate the dune ridges, with an understory of prairie grasses and wildflowers, such as puccoon, spiderwort, and prairie phlox. The swales are dominated either by buttonbush swamp or sedge meadows.

### ***Porter and Newton County***

To the east, Porter County offers a county parks department. The mission of the Porter County Parks and Recreation Board and Department is to preserve, protect and manage the natural, cultural and recreational resources within a diverse park system. The Board and Department is committed to delivering youth, adult and school programs to the residents of Porter County, while also providing a gateway into the natural beauty of our area through its unique parks and trails. The Porter County Parks and Recreation System offers two county parks: Sunset Hill Farm County Park and Brincka Cross Gardens for a combined acreage of 263 acres. The park system also offers a 9.1 mile trail, called the Calumet Trail.

There are also several Shirley Heinze Land Trust properties in Porter County, including the Beverly Shores Project Area, the Coulter Preserve, the Meadowbrook Preserve, the Walnut Woods Preserve, and the Little Calumet Wetlands Preserve. Total, there are 316 acres in Porter County that are managed by the Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

The Nature Conservancy manages approximately 809 acres in Porter County at the Moraine Nature Preserve.

To the south, a variety of Indiana State Fish and Wildlife Areas and Nature Preserves are found in Newton County. The LaSalle Fish and Wildlife Area is located in northwestern Newton County and contains approximately 3,797 acres. The Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area is also located in northern Newton County. The property supports a broad diversity of fauna including furbearers, waterfowl, upland game birds, shorebirds, song birds, and whitetail deer. The 9,956 acre site is also managed by the Indiana Department of Recreation, Division of Fish and Wildlife.

The Conrad Savanna Nature Preserve is located in the northern part of Newton County near the community of Lake Village. The preserve is managed by the Indiana Department of Recreation, Division of Nature Preserves and is an example of the landforms and associated plant communities that were characteristic of the area south of the Kankakee River at the time of settlement. Prescribed fires are used to maintain the area.

The Nature Conservancy manages several properties in Newton County, including the Kankakee Sands Preserve, Holley Savanna, and the Conrad Station Preserve. Together these properties total approximately 8,609 acres.



## CHAPTER FOUR: ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Accessibility is an issue that affects every community in the United States as the majority of the population will have a temporary activity limitation or permanent disability at some point during their lives. Although more common disabilities may be related to mobility or a physical impairment, disabilities can range from impairments in vision, speech, and hearing to learning disabilities, mental health disabilities, and cognitive disabilities. Park and recreation providers are well aware of the positive physical, psychological, and social benefits of those who participate in public recreation programs and services. The Lake County Parks and Recreation Board and Department continues to work toward greater accessibility in its parks and facilities.

### Federal Legislation Affecting Park Systems

Park and recreation master plans are affected by three pieces of federal legislation regarding accessibility for persons with disabilities: the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

The Architectural Barriers Act was the first federal law created requiring facilities designed, built, altered, or leased using federal funds be accessible to the public. Facilities built before the law was passed are usually not covered, but alterations undertaken after the law took effect are required to comply with the Act.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ensures access to programs and activities that are federally funded. The Act states that “no individual can be excluded from the participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by an Executive Agency.” The act requires specific actions from agencies, including a self-evaluation of its policies, facilities, programs, and services.

The most recent act to be passed affecting park plans is Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This Act extends the prohibition of discrimination in federally assisted programs established by Section 504 to all activities of State and local governments. This includes those activities that do not receive Federal financial assistance, such as providing modifications to

## Lake County Parks and Recreation System ADA Information at a Glance

ADA Requirement	Location
Accessibility Self-Evaluation (Narrative)	Pages 72 - 78
ADA Coordinator	Craig Zandstra 219-945-0543

policies, practices, and procedures.

This Act requires that local governments having 50 or more employees in the entire governmental unit, including Lake County, to complete the following requirements:

1. Complete an accessibility self-evaluation or update a previous self-evaluation created under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
2. Provide notice to the public about the entity’s ADA obligations, non-discrimination requirements and accessible services and facilities.
3. Designate an individual to coordinate ADA compliance.
4. Develop a transition plan identifying the physical changes or modifications that will be made to achieve program access.
5. Develop an ADA grievance procedure for those who feel that they have been discriminated against because of their disability or their friends or family with disabilities.

There are two accessibility standards to follow when evaluating the built environment. They include the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and the newer 2012 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Both have been used in the evaluation of the Lake County Park System. The aforementioned requirements have all been addressed in the update to this Plan. A complete copy of the self-evaluation and grievance procedures can be found in the Appendix.

### Universal Design

To eliminate physical and social barriers, the IDNR, DOR strongly recommends the use of Universal Design concepts as a best management practice. Universal Design is the design of products and environments for all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for

adaptation or specialized design. The concept is based on these seven principles:

1. Equitable Use
2. Flexibility in Use
3. Simple and Intuitive Use
4. Perceptible Information
5. Tolerance for Error
6. Low Physical Effort
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use

The Parks and Recreation Board is also encouraged to regularly consult with people who have disabilities when planning new facilities and programs. There are many facets of park and program planning to consider when implementing ADA and other accessibility laws, including signage, parking, restrooms, lighting, sound systems, and transportation. Not all barriers relate to physical access and may also include communication, programs, organization, and attitude of Parks Board members or staff.

### Grievance Procedures

A grievance concerning the accessibility of the Lake County Parks system’s services, programs or activities should be addressed to Craig Zandstra in the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department’s main office.

### Accessibility Self-Evaluation

An Accessibility Self-Evaluation was completed on several dates from August of 2013 to September of 2013. Both the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and the newer 2012 ADA Standards for Accessible Design were used in the evaluation of the Lake County Parks System. The chart on the following pages identifies specific elements that require improvements to meet federal ADA standards.

Location	Item	Assessment	Solution
Buckley Homestead: Hired Hands House	Entrance	No accessible entrance.	If it is not possible to make the main entrance accessible, create a dignified alternate accessible entrance.
	Entrance	Door thresholds are too high.	If there is a threshold greater than 3/4" high, remove or modify into a ramp.
	Doors	Door only has a 29" clear opening (minimum is 32").	Consider directing visitors to the dignified alternate accessible entrance.
	Doors	Door handle is not operable with a closed fist.	Replace inaccessible knobs with lever or loop handles.
	Stairs	Steps do not have continuous rails on both sides.	Add handrails if possible.
Buckley Homestead: Historic 1910 Farm and Outhouses	Vertical Circulation	There is no access to all public levels nor an accessible alternate route.	Historic home; modifications may decrease the historical integrity of home.
	Restrooms	Doors cannot be easily opened.	Adjust or install lighter doors.
Buckley Homestead: Lofi House	Entrance	Door entrance is only 30" (minimum is 32")	Historic building; widen door to 32" if possible.
	Entrance	Threshold is 1" in height (maximum is 3/4")	Remove or modify into ramp.
	Entrance	Carpeting/mats are higher than 1/2" high and are not secured to floor.	Remove or replace mats.
	Entrance	Door is not operable with closed fist.	Replace inaccessible knob with lever or loop handle.
	Restroom	Door weight is greater than 9 lbs.	Adjust or install lighter doors.
	Restroom	Toilet seat is too high.	Lower toilet to 17-19" above the floor.
Buckley Homestead: Observatory	Ramps	Railing height is too high at 42".	Lower railing to fall between 34 and 28" high.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No accessible van spaces.	Reconfigure to provide van-accessible spaces.
	Interior Doors	Threshold edges are too high at 2".	Remove or modify threshold into a ramp.
	Restrooms	No signs at inaccessible restrooms that give directions to accessible ones.	Add accessible signage at the side of the door.
	Restrooms	Pictograms no braille are used to identify restrooms.	Add signage with pictograms and braille.
	Restrooms	Doors are not equipped with handles operable with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever or loop handles.
	Restrooms	Faucet cannot be operated with a closed fist.	Replace with paddle handles.
Buckley Homestead: School House	Entrance	Historic building with no accessible entrance.	Create a dignified alternate accessible entrance if it is not possible to make the main entrance accessible.
	Entrance	Threshold is too high at 1".	Remove it or modify into a ramp.
	Entrance	Door handle not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knob with lever handle.
	Interior Doors	Door handles not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knob with lever handle.
	Stairs	Stairs at entrance do not have a continuous rail with extensions beyond the top and bottom stairs.	Add handrails.
	Restrooms	Only outhouses available and they are not accessible.	Add accessible outhouses.
Buckley Homestead: Tool Shed	Entrance	Historic Building - Main entrance not accessible entry.	If not possible to make main entrance accessible, create a dignified alternate accessible entrance.
	Entrance	Threshold at main entrance is greater than 3/4".	Remove it or modify with ramp.
	Entrance	Stairs do not have continuous rails on both sides with extensions beyond the top and bottom stairs.	Add handrails.

Location	Item	Assessment	Solution
Buckley Homestead: Visitor's Center	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Do not have striping to mark accessible spaces or the 5' aisles.	Add striping.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Do not have enough van accessible spaces.	Add at least one van accessible space.
	Entrance	Door cannot be opened with less than 5 lbs. of force (8.5 lbs.).	Adjust or install lighter doors.
	Interior Doors	Door cannot be opened with less than 5 lbs. of force (8 lbs.).	Adjust or install lighter doors.
	Emergency Egress	Emergency system does not have both flashing lights and audible signals.	Install visible and audible alarms.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	Tops of tables or counters are not between 28 and 34" high (36").	Lower part or all of high surface or provide an auxiliary counter.
	Restrooms	Stall door is not operable with a closed fist.	Replace inaccessible knobs with lever ones.
	Restrooms	There are no grab bars behind the toilet.	Install grab bars.
	Restrooms	There is not at least 29" from floor to bottom of sink apron (only 24").	Adjust or replace sink.
	Restrooms	The mirror is not mounted with the bottom edge of reflecting surface 40" high or lower (measures at 48").	Lower or tilt down mirror or add larger mirror anywhere in restroom.
	Drinking Fountains	There is not at least one fountain with its spout no higher than 36" from the ground (minimum spout measured was 41").	Provide cup dispensers for fountains with spouts that are too high.
Cedar Creek	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Parking lot does not have enough accessible parking spaces.	Reconfigure a reasonable number of spaces by repainting stripes.
	Restrooms	Doors are not equipped with accessible handles.	Replace knobs with levers.
	Restrooms	Doors cannot be opened easily (force measured at 7 lbs.).	Adjust or install lighter doors.
Deep River: Grist Mill	Entrance	There is not a route of travel that does not require stairs.	Add a ramp or alternative route.
	Entrance	Threshold to door is higher than 3/4".	Remove and replace threshold or add ramp.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	Counter top is higher than 34" high (measured at 43").	Lower part or all of high surface.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	Counter top is higher than 36" high (measured at 43").	Provide lower auxiliary counter.
Deep River: Gift Shop	Ramps	Slope of ramps is greater than 1:12.	Lengthen ramp to decrease slope.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Not enough accessible parking spaces.	Add one more accessible parking space.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Not enough van-accessible parking spaces.	Add one more van-accessible parking space.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Accessible spaces are not marked with signage.	Repaint and add signage.
	Entrance	Entrance door is only 26" wide; Minimum width is 32".	Widen door to 32".
	Restrooms	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add tactile signage.
Deep River: Playground	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Not enough accessible parking spaces.	Add one more accessible parking space.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Not enough van-accessible parking spaces.	Add one more van-accessible parking space.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Accessible spaces not marked with International Symbol of Access.	Add signs.
	Restrooms	No accessible signage.	Add signage.
	Restrooms	Doors cannot be opened easily (measured at 6 lbs. force; maximum is 5 lbs.)	Adjust or replace doors.

Location	Item	Assessment	Solution
Deep River: Saw Mill	Horizontal Circulation	Not all public spaces are on accessible route of travel.	Add ramps or lifts.
	Rooms and Spaces	No 5' circle or T-shaped space for turning a wheelchair.	Rearrange furnishings to clear more room.
	Rooms and Spaces	All obstacles are not cane-detectable on the circulation paths.	Remove obstacles.
	Vertical Circulation	There are not ramps, lifts, or elevators to all public levels.	Install ramps or lifts.
	Vertical Circulation	There is not signage to an accessible alternative route.	Post clear signage.
Deep River: Sugar Shack	Doors	Thresholds are more than 3/4" high.	Remove or modify into a ramp.
	Emergency Egress	Emergency system does not have both flashing lights and audible signals.	Install visible and audible alarms.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	The top of the ordering counter is 54" high (maximum is 34").	Lower part or all of high surface.
Deep River Waterpark: Clock Tower Restroom	Tables, Seats, and Counters	Cashier counter is 42" high (maximum is 36" high).	Provide lower auxiliary counter.
	Restrooms	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add signage.
	Restrooms	Stall door handles are not accessible with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
	Restrooms	Sink rim is 36" high (maximum is 34" high).	Adjust or replace sink.
Deep River Waterpark	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Not enough accessible spaces. Only provide 12 and need 20.	Reconfigure to add additional accessible spaces.
	Restroom	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add signage.
Deep River: Health Services Restroom	Ramps	Slope of ramp is greater than 1:12.	Lengthen ramp to decrease slope.
	Restrooms	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add signage.
Deep River: Main Office	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Accessible spaces do not have 5' access aisle.	Add 5' access aisle.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No van accessible spaces.	Add one van-accessible space.
	Entrance	Door is too heavy at 9.5 lbs (maximum is 5 lbs).	Install power-operated door.
	Doors	Interior doors are too heavy.	Adjust or replace doors.
	Counter	Front counter height is 43" (maximum is 28-34").	Lower all or part of high surface.
Deep River: Park Services Greenhouse	Entrance	Threshold is too high.	Remove or replace with ramp.
Deep River: Park Services Main Building	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No signs for accessible or van accessible spaces.	Add signage.
	Restrooms	Doors to restrooms are too heavy (6.5 lbs; maximum is 5 lbs.).	Adjust or replace doors.
	Restrooms	Stalls do not have grab bars behind and on side of wall nearest to toilet.	Add grab bars.
Deep River Water Park: Surfside Cafe	Seats, Tables, and Counters	Main counter is higher than 36".	Provide lower auxiliary counter.
	Restrooms	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add signage.

Location	Item	Assessment	Solution
Gibson Woods: Main Building	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Parking lot needs 5' striped bays to distinguish accessible parking.	Paint stripes.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No van accessible parking spaces.	Add van accessible parking space.
	Entrance	Door handle not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knob with lever handle.
	Entrance	Door requires too much force to open (measured at 6.5 lbs).	Adjust or install lighter door.
	Doors	Doors are not operable with closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	The counter is 39" high (maximum is 36").	Provide lower auxiliary counter or folding shelf.
	Restrooms	There is no tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage placed to side of door.
	Restrooms	Stall door not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
	Restrooms	No grab bars in accessible stall.	Add grab bars.
Grand Kankakee Marsh: Boat Launch	Entrance	The accessible route of travel is not stable, firm, and slip resistant.	Repair or replace surfacing to be stable, firm, and slip resistant.
	Ramps	Ramp slopes are greater than 1:12.	Repair or replace ramp.
	Ramps	Railing is not sturdy or between 34 to 38" high (measured at 42" high).	Secure railing and adjust height to measure between 34 to 38" high.
	Ramps	Surface of ramps are not non-slip.	Add non-slip surface material.
Grand Kankakee Marsh: Cabin	Entrance	The stairs at main entrance make it not accessible.	If it is not possible to make main entrance accessible, create dignified alternate accessible entrance.
	Entrance	Threshold is greater than 3/4" high (measured at 1 1/2" high).	Remove or replace threshold or modify into a ramp.
	Entrance	Door closes too quickly (timed at 2 seconds; must be 3 seconds at a minimum).	Adjust door closer.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	The main counter is 42" high (maximum is 36").	Provide lower auxiliary counter or folding shelf.
	Restrooms	There is no tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage placed to the side of the door.
Lake Etta: Banquet Hall	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Accessible spaces not marked with International Symbol of Accessibility.	Add signs.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	Cashier counter is higher than 36".	Provide lower auxiliary counter.
	Restrooms	Accessible stall not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with levers.
Lake Etta: Beach Concession Stand	Ramps	Slope is greater than 1:12.	Lengthen ramp to decrease slope.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Accessible spaces not marked with signage.	Add signage.
	Seats, Tables, and Counters	Cashier counter is higher than 36".	Provide lower auxiliary counter.
Lake Etta: Fishing Pier	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Van-accessible spaces are not signed.	Add signage.
Lake Etta: Group Pavilion	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Not enough van accessible spaces.	Reconfigure to add van-accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Accessible spaces not marked with International Symbol of Accessibility.	Add signage.
	Seats, Counters, and Tables	Main counter higher than 36".	Provide lower auxiliary counter.
Lake Etta: Restroom by Playground	Restrooms	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage.
	Restrooms	Stall door not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
Lemon Lake: Shelters 6 and 7; Restrooms; Dog Run	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No van-accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate van-accessible spaces.
	Restrooms	Door handles not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
	Restrooms	Doors cannot be opened easily (11 lbs).	Adjust or replace doors.
	Restrooms	Sink rim higher than 34".	Adjust or replace sink.

Location	Item	Assessment	Solution
Lemon Lake: Fishing Pier and Parking Lot	Parking and Drop-off Area	No 5' access aisle between bays.	Reconfigure to add aisle.
	Parking and Drop-off Area	No van accessible spaces available.	Add one van-accessible space.
Lemon Lake: Playground and Parking Lot	Parking and Drop-off Area	No accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Area	No van-accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate one van-accessible space.
Lemon Lake: Shelter 3 and Parking Lot	Parking and Drop-off Area	No accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Area	No van-accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate one van-accessible space.
	Entrance	Threshold into shelter is higher than 3/4".	Add gravel to meet concrete slab at shelter base.
Lemon Lake: Shelter 8 and Parking Lot	Parking and Drop-off Area	No accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Area	No van-accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate one van-accessible space.
Lemon Lake: Shelters 1, 9, and Pit Toilet	Parking and Drop-off Area	No accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Area	No van-accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate one van-accessible space.
	Restrooms	No accessible restroom.	Reconfigure restroom.
	Restrooms	No signs at inaccessible restrooms that give directions to accessible ones.	Install signage.
	Restrooms	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage.
	Restrooms	Doors not equipped with accessible handles.	Replace with lever handles.
	Restrooms	No grab bars.	Install grab bars.
Lemon Lake: Shelter 4 and 5	Seats, Tables, and Counters	At shelter 4, aisles between fixed seating is not a minimum of 36" wide.	Rearrange chairs and tables to provide 36" aisles.
Lemon Lake: Softball Field, Parking Lot, and Restroom	Parking and Drop-off Area	No accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Area	No van-accessible spaces marked in gravel lot.	Designate one van-accessible space.
	Restrooms	Doors cannot be opened easily (force is at 8 lbs.)	Adjust or replace doors.
Lemon Lake: Tennis Courts, Parking Lot, and Restrooms	Parking and Drop-off Area	Not enough accessible spaces. Need at least four in this parking lot.	Reconfigure to add accessible spaces.
	Parking and Drop-off Area	No van-accessible spaces available.	Add at least one van-accessible space.
Oak Ridge Prairie: Winter Shelter	Restrooms	Doors weigh more than 5 lbs. (6.5 lbs).	Adjust or install lighter doors.
Stoney Run: Vietnam Memorial	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Spaces do not provide 5' access aisle.	Reconfigure to provide access aisle.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Van accessible space does not have access aisle.	Reconfigure to provide access aisle.
	Restrooms	There is no tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage placed to side of door.
	Restrooms	Doors cannot be opened easily (maximum 5 lbs.).	Adjust or install lighter doors.
	Restrooms	Grab bars are not installed behind toilet.	Install grab bar behind toilet.
Stoney Run: Playground and Cross Country Shelter	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Spaces do not provide 5' access aisle.	Reconfigure to provide access aisle.
	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Van accessible space does not have access aisle.	Reconfigure to provide access aisle.
	Entrance	Door is too heavy (maximum is 5 lbs.).	Adjust or replace door.
	Restroom	There is no tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage.
	Restroom	Doors are not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
	Restroom	Stall door is not operable with a closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
	Restroom	Grab bars are not behind and on side wall nearest to toilet.	Add grab bars.

Location	Item	Assessment	Solution
Stoney Run: Restroom	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No accessible or van accessible parking spaces.	Designate at least one van accessible space.
	Restroom	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage.
	Additional Access	Drinking fountain controls are not operable with a closed fist.	Replace controls.
Three Rivers: Bellaboo's	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No van-accessible spaces	Reconfigure to provide at least one space.
Three Rivers	Parking and Drop-off Areas	No van-accessible spaces.	Reconfigure to provide at least one space.
	Restrooms	No tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage.
	Restrooms	Stall doors are not operable with a closed fist.	Replace inaccessible knobs with levers.
Turkey Creek Golf Course	Parking and Drop-off Areas	Not enough van-accessible spaces.	Add one more van-accessible space.
	Entrance	Door is not operable with closed fist.	Replace knobs with lever handles.
	Entrance	Doors are too heavy.	Adjust doors or replace.
	Vertical Circulation	Accessible route to second floor is not clear.	Post clear signs directing people along an accessible route to ramps.
	Stairs	Stairs do not have continuous rails on both sides with extensions beyond the top and bottom stairs.	Add or replace handrails.
Turkey Creek: Half-Way House	Restroom	There is no tactile signage identifying restrooms.	Add accessible signage.
Erie-Lackawanna Trail: 73rd and Burr	Parking and Drop-off Area	There are no van accessible spaces.	Reconfigure to add van-accessible space.
Erie-Lackawanna Trail: Prairie Estates	Parking and Drop-off Area	There are no van accessible spaces.	Reconfigure to add van-accessible space.



## CHAPTER FIVE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is an essential component of a credible, quality plan, and therefore, plays a large role in the development of a park and recreation master plan. Even though the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board and Department have specialized knowledge on the development of parks and park planning issues, it is impossible to recognize all of the issues important to local residents and park users. Therefore, an essential task in the planning process is soliciting public input. Several methods to gather input were used, including a community survey and a public meeting.

### Public Input Meeting

The public input meeting was held on Thursday, January 9th at 7 pm at Lake County Government Center located at 2293 North Main Street in Crown Point. The meeting was advertised in The Times of Northwest Indiana. Twelve members of the public participated in the meeting.

A brief presentation was given about the Lake County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the planning process. Participants were given the opportunity to discuss park and recreation issues

and to ask questions. Comment sheets were also passed out to meeting participants to submit written comment if they were not comfortable voicing their opinions during the meeting. One comment sheet was received and has been included in the appendix. The following items were identified and openly discussed during the meeting:

- Re-establish the advisory board to the Park Board. Years ago, there was an advisory board that consisted of local businessmen and women who worked gratuitously. This board selected many of the park sites that exist today.
- Construct a lodge at the area known as Big Maple Lake. A lodge could bring in money and be a destination place for people who live all over the country and house annual events, such as a Boy Scouts jamboree. The Department could work with the County's visitor's bureau and others to help with funding. Big Maple Lake is adjacent to a horse barn that could provide horseback riding opportunities.

- Create additional areas for equestrian trails. Potential areas for additional trails include Buckley Homestead and the Grand Kankakee Marsh. There are not many equestrian trails in Lake County, and the trails that exist are not extensive. Many riders travel to Tippecanoe State Park and other such places for longer horse rides. Work with local equestrian clubs to help maintain trails and to complete service projects within the parks.
- Buckley Homestead, Deep River, and the Grand Kankakee Marsh are outstanding properties that the residents of Lake County are fortunate to have.
- Lake County Parks has a horse-friendly attitude that is appreciated. The park staff are always willing to accommodate the equestrian riders.
- More funds should be allocated towards protecting and maintaining Lake County's natural areas and rare species. Lake County has natural areas that are not found elsewhere and the County has a rich heritage. Climate change and other factors encourage invasive species to grow faster than ever before, and natural area management needs to be used so that the natural areas and rare species do not succumb to invasive species or woody brush.
- Careful thought should be put into where equestrian trails are located so that high quality natural areas are not disturbed.
- Lake County Parks has done a good job at identifying natural areas and obtaining grants to purchase natural areas.
- Create a plan to maintain the natural areas.

Participants were encouraged to continue their involvement by attending the Park and Recreation Board meeting in April when the final plan will be presented to the public.

## Community Survey

The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department conducted an online survey designed to gather information about the recreation patterns, interests, and general

opinions of the residents of Lake County. This survey was available to the public from December 15, 2013 to March 1, 2014. A hard-copy survey was available at all park locations, and a link to the survey was made available online at the following locations:

- The Lake County Parks and Recreation Website.
- The Facebook Page for Lake County Parks and Bellaboo's Children's Play and Discovery Center.
- The Times of Northwest Indiana.

There were 103 survey responses. Survey questions were prepared based on a number of influencing factors. The survey includes questions that ascertained current use of park facilities and programs by respondents and questions that asked the respondents to present and prioritize their interests in future Lake County Parks and Recreation Department facilities, programs, and services. At the end, a general question asking for 'additional comments' provided a forum for respondents to give open input to the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department.

Survey respondents were mostly male (53%) and fell into the age categories of 30-45 (25%), 56-65 (27%), and 66 and older (21%). Respondents lived all over the county, but most responses were derived from Center Township (15%) and Hobart Township (15%).

Most of the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department parks are visited at least a few times a year by all respondents, with Buckley Homestead, Deep River County Park, and Lemon Lake County Park being visited the most. The parks visited the least by respondents appeared to be Lake Etta County Park, the Thomas Conway Observatory at Buckley Homestead, and Turkey Creek Golf Course. The most popular types of programming includes special events and recreational activities (such as golf, disc golf, and swimming). Survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department parks, with all categories earning good marks (quality, amenities, natural areas, safety, maintenance, and cleanliness). Restrooms was the only category that ranked 'average.' Concessions at the parks were also

given good marks. Respondents gave good marks for concession quality, staff, cleanliness, and food items offered.

As for level of satisfaction for programs, respondents indicated the highest satisfaction with nature programs, adult programs, historic programs, and special events. Respondents also indicated that they were satisfied with the value and fees for these programs. Staff communication skills also ranked high, with respondents giving staff excellent marks in knowledge and customer service. Staff was given good marks in handling problems and complaints and on department publications.

Survey respondents expressed great satisfaction with the quality of Lake County Parks and Recreation Department amenities and facilities. All park sites listed received good to excellent marks. Bellaboo's Play and Discovery Center and Deep River Waterpark earned the highest marks. Deep River Visitor Center and Wood's Historic Grist Mill at Deep River also ranked with high marks. Over 77% of respondents indicated they did not know the quality of the Lake Etta Banquet Hall or the Thomas Conway Observatory. These are relatively new facilities and the survey results reflect the unfamiliarity with the quality of these newer facilities.

Survey respondents expressed that they strongly agreed that Lake County Parks employees are courteous and professional (62%), and sensitive to the special needs of the disabled (34%). Respondents also strongly agreed that the Parks are safe and secure (48%), increase the value of their property (33%), provide for economic development (37%), and increase awareness of the environment (57%). Most respondents somewhat agreed that Lake County Parks are well-maintained and in good shape (49%), staff was available and easy to find for assistance (36%), and that the Parks increase area tourism (42%).

Respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that "We do not need any more park facilities" (55%). When asked the best way to pay for increased operating costs, respondents somewhat agreed that increasing user fees (31%), building revenue-generating facilities

(43%), and bonds (35%) were the best way to accomplish this. Respondents strongly disagreed in increasing taxes (33%) and reducing park services (56%).

Looking at the future of the Lake County Parks System, respondents strongly agreed that new parks should be developed (60%) and that the system should be more fully developed (60%). Respondents strongly agreed that more land should be acquired to serve the present population of Lake County (44%) and that the County will need more park land in the next fifteen years (54%).

When asked how effective the Parks Department was in providing information regarding programs and services, most respondents indicated the Pathfinder Magazine and the internet website were the most effective resources. Resources that were ranked somewhat effective included Facebook, mailers/fliers, newspapers, radio, television, parks department staff, and friends/relatives.

Survey respondents were most interested in the preservation of resources: natural, cultural, and historical. Wildlife preservation, nature preserves, and the preservation/restoration of natural areas each received a "Very Important" rating over 50%. The importance of trail corridors also ranked high, with 58% of respondents indicating this was "Very Important."

When asked the level of interest of Lake County Parks adding new facilities, 25% of respondents indicated that they were "Highly Interested" in a campground facility. Other notable responses included interpretive trails (30% were somewhat interested), a south county nature center (26% were somewhat interested), and an outdoor amphitheater (23% were somewhat interested).

When asked to consider the recreational needs of their family over the next five years or more, survey respondents indicated that running/walking (49%), open/passive space (46%), and outdoor adventure activities (40%) were the highest priority. Environmental education (39%), family activities (35%), and bicycling (31%) were ranked the next highest priority, with weekend programs (26%), theater/performing

arts (21%), and senior programs (21%) ranking the next highest priority.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to write additional comments at the end of the survey. All comments received, along with the complete survey results, are included in the appendix.

## Public Presentation of Plan

The Lake County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was presented to the public on May 8th, 2014 at 7 pm at the regularly scheduled Lake County Parks and Recreation Board meeting. Seven members of the public attended the meeting.

A presentation was given about the Lake County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the planning process. Participants were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions. Comment sheets were handed out to all participants, however, none were returned. Meeting minutes can be found in the appendix.



# CHAPTER 6

## CHAPTER SIX: NEEDS ANALYSIS

There are a number of ways to determine the level of need for park and recreation services in a community. Some examples of needs analysis methods are as follows:

1. The Level of Service (LOS) Standards for Parks and Open Space was developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and guides communities to set local standards based on need, values, and expectations. This method is expressed in acres per 1000 people. This method requires an assessment of existing facilities, public input, and the ability to measure and prioritize needs.
2. The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) was developed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service to help communities determine the types of recreational opportunities needed to achieve their recreational goals. This method is based on six rating classes that range from

urban to primitive and indicators such as access, social encounters, and visitor impacts. ROS is best suited for large-scale, natural resource-based recreation sites.

3. The Issue Analysis Method uses information collected for the master plan to identify and resolve needs, problems, and conflicts. Some issues are evident to the park board and the park administration, or they may appear in the public participation process.

To analyze the recreation needs of the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department, a combination of the LOS Method and the Issue Analysis Method were used.

### Level of Service Standards

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation updates the Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years. This document provides

Indiana Standards	Lake County Parks and Recreation	All Public Local Recreation
Recommended Public Local Recreation Acres for the Park Board's Planning Area: 9,920	Actual Park Acreage in Lake County Park System: 6,189.23	Total Public Local Recreation Acres in the Park Board's Planning Area: 23,268
Recommended Acres per Person: 0.02	Actual Acres per Person: 0.01	Actual Acres per Person: 0.05

*Summary chart of recreational lands available in Lake County compared to state standards.*

standards for outdoor recreation opportunities in the State of Indiana. Standards currently in place are for Counties (20 acres per 1,000 people), Indiana Regions (35 acres per 1,000 people), and the State (55 acres per 1,000 people). Determination of acreage amounts is based on publicly owned lands and excludes private (not open for public use), commercial, and school corporation acreage.

According to the standards set forth in the Indiana SCORP, with a population of 496,005, the Park Board's planning area should have approximately 9,920 acres of local public recreation and open space areas. Currently, there are approximately 23,268 acres of local recreation and open space areas in the planning area, with 6,189 of those acres being managed by the Lake County Parks Department. With 0.01 acres per person, the Park Board's planning area ranks slightly below the recommended standard. An additional 3,731 acres should be acquired to reach the standard 0.02 acres per person.

### Issue Analysis Method

The Issue Analysis Method uses information collected for the master plan to identify and resolve needs, problems, and conflicts. Some issues are evident to the park board and the park administration, or they may appear in the public participation process. Issues were gathered from the following sources:

- An inventory of the Lake County Parks and Recreation System took place during the Summer of 2013. Lake County Park staff conducted a walk-through of

the existing park facilities considering maintenance, safety, and accessibility issues. Photographs were taken at each site, including general park views and detail photos of park amenities.

- Lake County Park staff gathered demographic and economic data in regards to Lake County from the US Census Bureau and Indiana STATS.
- Public input was solicited through a public meeting and a public survey. More information about the public input process can be found in Chapter 5.
- Lake County Park staff solicited input from Executive Staff members during regularly scheduled Executive Staff meetings.

Common issues appeared throughout the planning process and were categorized into the following themes: Accessibility, Safety, and Maintenance; Capital Improvements, and Programming; Financial Resources; Image, Public Awareness, and Communications; and Value and Credibility.

### Park Signage

Develop and implement a comprehensive program to standardize and improve departmental signage. To include but not limited to park entrance signs, directional signs, trail signage, and interpretative signage. The program will standardize language, design, placement and construction wherever possible. As part of this initiative will be the further enhancement of a unified brand identity.

## Roadways, Parking Lots, and Paved Surfaces

Develop and implement a plan to maintain, upgrade and replace all hard surfaces on Park Department property. Every single property has issues with roadways, parking lots, trails, and gravel roads. A rough estimate of total surface area and needs places a potential total cost at one million dollars or more.

recognized designs: e.g. Morton Arboretum, Meijer Gardens. This may also include sculptures and other art in the park concepts. Conceptually this program will be designed to attract sponsors and corporate donors. The Art in the Park concept can be expanded to all park sites.

## In-Park Trail Improvement and Expansion

Survey all departmental in-park trails and develop a maintenance program including trail construction standards, trail maintenance standards, staff training and a trail improvement and expansion plan.

## Technology Improvements

Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to add and improve technologies that improve monitoring of departmental operations, data gathering and analysis, POS and reservation systems and other customer information services. These may include GIS, wireless systems, computer and software upgrades.

## Energy and Sustainability Issues

Investigate and develop a program to implement energy alternatives that reduce our energy consumption and expenses. This may be a capital intensive program and will rely upon grant funding.

## Americans with Disabilities Act

Assess and review all ADA requirements and needs within the Department and develop a plan that removes barriers and improves access for all users. Where possible use Universal Design concepts to improve inclusion. Due to financial limitations items will need to be prioritized to provide maximum impact to the public.

## Adventure Garden/Art in the Park

Expand the Adventure Garden concept at Three Rivers/Bellaboo's to mirror other nationally





# CHAPTER 7

## CHAPTER SEVEN: PRIORITIES & ACTION SCHEDULE

### Priorities

Priorities and Action Schedule items were developed based on the findings of the on-site inventory and assessment of each park site, public input, administrative staff input, and park board input.

The Department foresees itself as a progressive leader with multifaceted responsibility in managing natural resources that range from the shore of Lake Michigan to the waters of the Grand Kankakee Marsh. With this Action Schedule the department can achieve its goal of improving the quality of life in Lake County by being alert to the opportunities to acquire, reclaim, and preserve significant natural systems and open space resources and expand its recreational, cultural, and educational programs.

A number of initiatives are underway throughout the Lake County Parks and Recreation System to make improvements for ADA accessibility, modernization of facilities, and enhancement of user experiences. Development of facilities that generate revenue for the Lake County Parks

Department also continues to be a priority as these facilities help fund other initiatives for the agency.

Land acquisition also continues to play an important role as a priority for the Lake County Parks and Recreation Department. The Lake County Parks and Recreation Department has developed a long-range vision for future land acquisition. While the vision plan identifies sites that will expand the department's current holdings, it will also create partnerships with other agencies for management of lands held in ownership outside the parks department.

### Action Schedule

An overall Action Schedule for the entire parks department has been developed to show capital expenditures at each park site for the next five years. The Action Schedule has then been broken down by park site to show specific action item, year of implementation, and estimated costs.

## Overview Action Plan

The following table identifies the overall capital expenditures that have been identified for the parks and facilities through the year 2018. The capital expenditure items listed do not include items under \$15,000 in cost as these items are considered general maintenance.

Overview Action Plan						
Park	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Grand Total
Buckley Homestead	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$95,000
Cedar Creek Golf Course	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
Deep River Park	\$20,000	\$55,000	\$25,000	\$35,000	\$45,000	\$180,000
Deep River Waterpark	\$1,759,000	\$45,000	\$35,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$1,849,000
Gibson Woods	\$175,000	\$220,000	\$55,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$490,000
Grand Kankakee Marsh	\$28,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$65,000	\$5,000	\$108,000
Lake Etta	\$200,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$240,000
Lemon Lake	\$0	\$205,000	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$30,000	\$300,000
Oak Ridge Prairie	\$20,000	\$605,000	\$607,000	\$37,000	\$37,000	\$1,306,000
Stoney Run	\$30,000	\$3,000	\$20,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$59,000
Three Rivers	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$45,000	\$15,000	\$145,000
Turkey Creek Golf Course	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$180,000
Erie Lackawanna Trail	\$3,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$28,000
Oak Savannah Trail	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$18,000
Veteran's Memorial Parkway Trail	\$80,000	\$725,000	\$450,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,255,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,478,000</b>	<b>\$2,018,000</b>	<b>\$1,342,000</b>	<b>\$280,000</b>	<b>\$185,000</b>	<b>\$6,303,000</b>

## Action Plan

<b>Buckley Homestead</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Restore Milkhouse/Windmill				\$20,000			Grant/GPI
Restore Log Cabin	\$30,000						GPI/LLI
Improve Connection from Visitor Center to Orchard Trail/Buckley House		\$25,000					GPI/LLI
Restore and Repair Historic Buildings			\$10,000		\$10,000		GPI/LLI/Grant
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$95,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Construct New Visitor Center						\$2,900,000	
Construct Playground						\$275,000	
Build Log Barn						\$55,000	
Improve Existing Hendricks Street Parking Lot						\$85,000	
Construct West Parking Lot, Improve Accessibility						\$110,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$3,425,000</b>	

<b>Cedar Creek Golf Course</b>							
<b>Project</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Golf Driving Range Distribution Center		\$25,000					Bond/GPI
Mini Golf Improvements	\$10,000		\$10,000				Bond/GPI
Facility Entry Enhancements	\$5,000						Bond/GPI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Drainage and Golf Course Improvements						\$100,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$100,000</b>	

<b>Deep River</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Mill Water Wheel Restoration	\$15,000						GPI
Construct and Rebuild Four County Line Shelters		\$30,000		\$30,000			GPI
Big Maple Lake Development		\$20,000	\$20,000				GPI/Grant
Big Maple Lake Restoration	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000		GPI/Grant
Grist Mill Parking Lot Restroom					\$20,000		GPI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
New Maintenance Facility for DRWP						\$275,000	
Park Lodge						\$13,000,000	
Sugar Shack Reconstruction						\$30,000	
South Park Camping/Cabins						\$11,000,000	
Pave Waterpark Delivery Entrance from Randolph Street						\$140,000	
Relocate Bridge to River Ford						\$35,000	
Ainsworth Road Underpass between Sulky Track and Big Maple Lake						\$500,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$24,980,000</b>	

<b>Deep River Waterpark</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
New Mat Ride	\$1,500,000						Bond
Security Upgrades		\$5,000		\$5,000	\$5,000		Bond/Grant
VGB			\$35,000				Non Reverting
Cabanas	\$9,000						Non Reverting
Slide Tower Renovations	\$250,000						Bond
Gel Coat		\$40,000					Bond
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$1,759,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$1,849,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Flow Rider Attraction						\$1,200,000	
Construct New US 30 Entrance						\$1,500,000	
Replace Existing Water Filters						\$250,000	
Water Treatment Expansion						\$500,000	
Corporate/Private Areas Addition						\$100,000	
New Wave Pool						\$12,000,000	
Rebuild Paddles Play Zone						\$450,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$16,000,000</b>	

<b>Gibson Woods</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Restoration/Enhancements in Nature Preserve	\$170,000	\$220,000	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$20,000		Grant
Boardwalk Improvements	\$5,000		\$5,000				GPI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>	<b>\$220,000</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$490,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Entrance and Parking Lot Mill and Resurface						\$90,000	
Modernize Exhibits						\$120,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$210,000</b>	

<b>Grand Kankakee Marsh</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
New Boat Launch Dock	\$20,000						GPI
Restoration/Enhancement of Various Habitats	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000		Grant
Goose Lake Unit A Hunting Improvements	\$3,000						GPI
New Pumps for Hog Marsh				\$60,000			GPI/LLI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$108,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Renovations/Additions to Hunting Cabin						\$225,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$225,000</b>	

<b>Lake Etta</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Spray Pad	\$200,000						Bond
Banquet Hall Improvements, Cold and Dry Storage		\$20,000	\$20,000				GPI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Fishing Lake Edge Restoration with Access Nodes						\$20,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$20,000</b>	

<b>Lemon Lake</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Spray Pad		\$200,000					Bond
Dog Park Improvements		\$5,000		\$5,000			GPI/LLI
Replace Shelter 6					\$30,000		GPI/LLI
Replace Shelters 7 and 8			\$30,000	\$30,000			GPI/LLI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$205,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Pave Entry Road and Road to Dogwood Run						\$250,000	
Pave Parking Lot at Concession/ Restroom Building						\$75,000	
West Perimeter Fencing - Chain Link						\$20,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$345,000</b>	

<b>Oak Ridge Prairie</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Fishing Pond Shoreline Restoration/Enhancement			\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000		GPI/Grant
Restoration and Enhancement of Natural Areas	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000		GPI/Grant
Maintenance Barn Extension for Natural Areas/Trails Storage				\$30,000			GPI/LLI
New Shelter				\$30,000			GPI/LLI
Link Oak Savannah and Erie Lackawanna Trails	\$15,000	\$600,000	\$600,000				GPI/LLI/ Grant/CN/ Enbridge
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$605,000</b>	<b>\$607,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$1,306,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Multi-Purpose Green Building						\$2,500,000	
Snow Making Machine						\$85,000	
Electricity/Water/Sewer into Park from Airport						\$160,000	
Mill and Resurface Entrance Drive and Parking Lot						\$225,000	
Restoration and Enhancement of Natural Areas						\$100,000	
C&O Trail Construction into Park						\$150,000	
Pave Maintenance Drive (Redar Road) and West 58th Avenue East Service Entrance into Park						\$200,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$3,420,000</b>	

<b>Stoney Run</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Shelter Improvements at Group Campground	\$30,000						GPI
New Playground Tot Lot/Swing Bay			\$20,000				GPI
Trail Improvements		\$3,000		\$3,000	\$3,000		GPI/LLI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$59,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Pave Maintenance Road						\$40,000	
Pave Camp Road						\$125,000	
Toilet Construction at Warming Shelter						\$30,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$195,000</b>	

<b>Three Rivers</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Reconstruct 1 Shelter		\$10,000					GPI
Expand Bellaboo's Outdoor Adventure Playground	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000		GPI/LLI
Lake Edge Restoration	\$5,000		\$5,000		\$5,000		Grant
Bellaboo's Storage Addition			\$35,000	\$35,000			GPI/LLI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$145,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
East Park Development with Playground and Parking Lot						\$180,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$180,000</b>	

<b>Turkey Creek Golf Course</b>							
<b>Project - Action Plan</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Parking Lot Lighting			\$5,000	\$5,000			GPI
Enbridge Rehabilitation	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$10,000				Enbridge
Yellow Tee Renovations			\$5,000		\$5,000		GPI
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>	
<b>Project - Vision Plan</b>							
						<b>2019 &amp; Beyond</b>	
Mill and Resurface Entrance Drive and Parking Lots						\$150,000	
Turkey Creek Streambank Restoration						\$225,000	
South Golf Course Expansion						\$300,000	
Develop Driving Range						\$150,000	
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$825,000</b>	

Erie Lackawanna Trail								
Project - Action Plan	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Funding Source	
Colfax Enhancements		\$5,000	\$5,000				GPI/Grant	
Restoration and Enhancement of Natural Areas		\$5,000		\$5,000	\$5,000		GPI/Grant	
Drinking Fountain at Burr Street Trail Head	\$3,000						GPI/Grant	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>		
Project - Vision Plan							2019 & Beyond	
Mill and Resurface Trail						\$210,000		
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$210,000</b>		

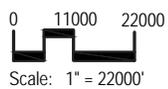
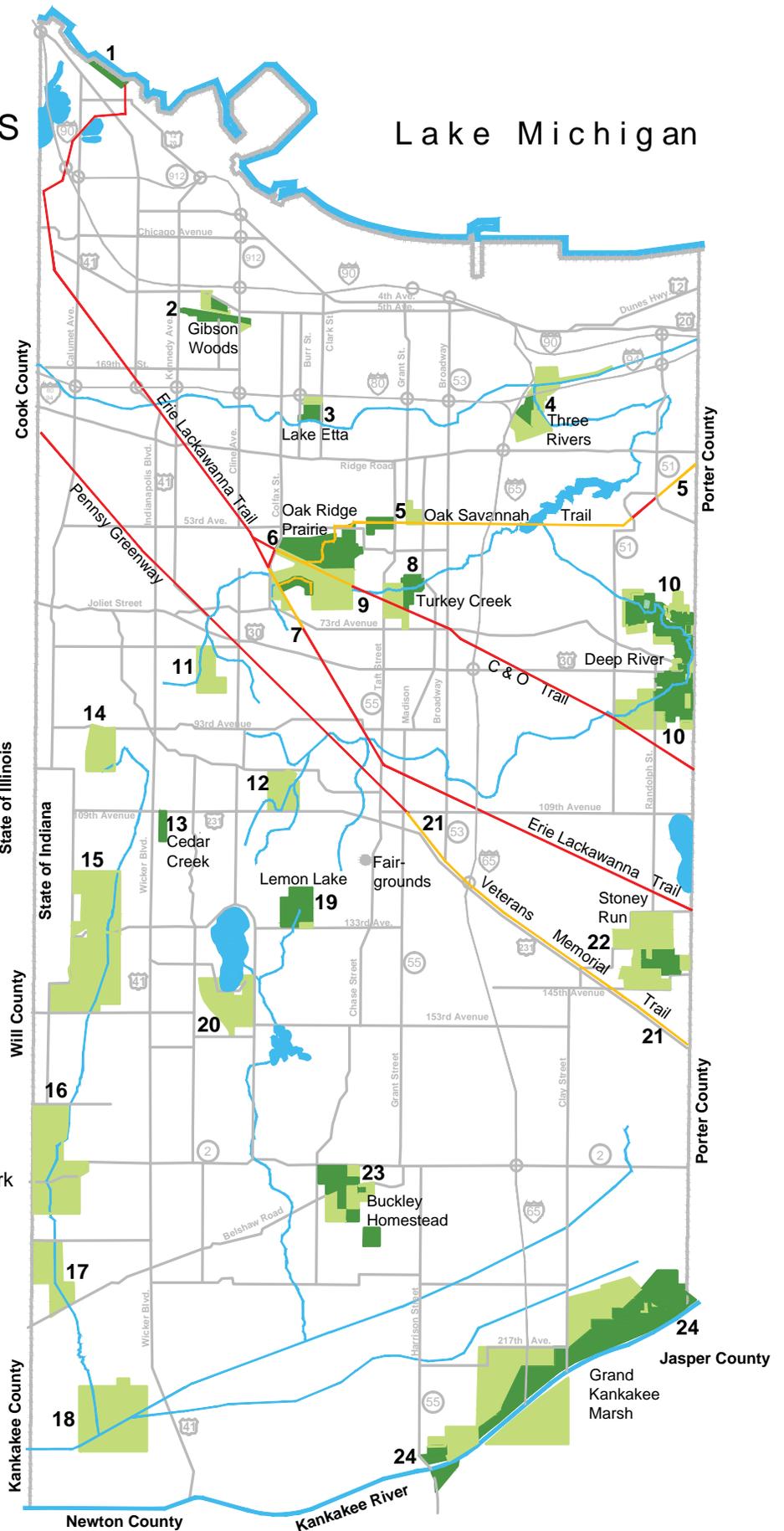
Oak Savannah Trail							
Project - Action Plan	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Funding Source
West Broadway Frontage Road Fencing	\$3,000						GPI/LLI/Grant
Restoration and Enhancement of Natural Areas		\$5,000		\$5,000	\$5,000		GPI/Grant
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	

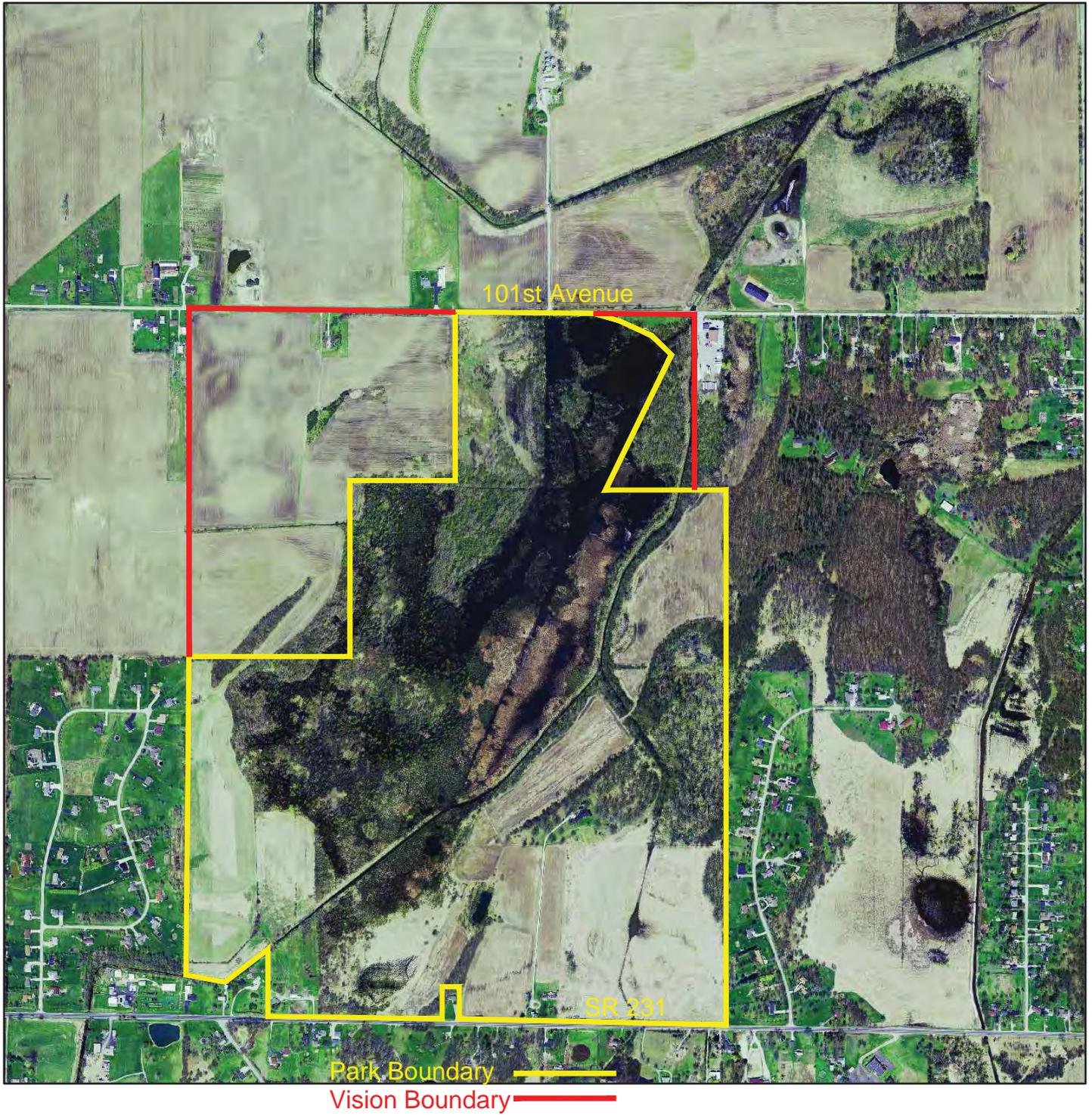
Veterans Memorial Trail								
Project - Action Plan	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Funding Source	
Land Acquisition from 113th Avenue to Broadway	\$80,000						Grant	
Construct Trail from 113th Avenue to Broadway		\$275,000					GPI/LLI/Grant	
Land Acquisition from Broadway to Iowa Street		\$450,000	\$450,000				Grant	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$725,000</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,255,000</b>		
Project - Vision Plan							2019 & Beyond	
Construction Broadway Bridge						\$900,000		
Construction Trail from Broadway to Iowa Street						\$800,000		
Land Acquisition from Iowa Street to Leroy						\$500,000		
Construct Trail from Iowa Street to Leroy						\$300,000		
Land Acquisition from Leroy to County Line Road						\$600,000		
Construct Trail from Leroy to County Line Road						\$550,000		
Acquire and Construct Trail Parking at 145th Avenue and State Road 231.						\$500,000		
<b>Grand Total</b>						<b>\$4,275,000</b>		

# LAKE COUNTY PARKS VISION PLAN

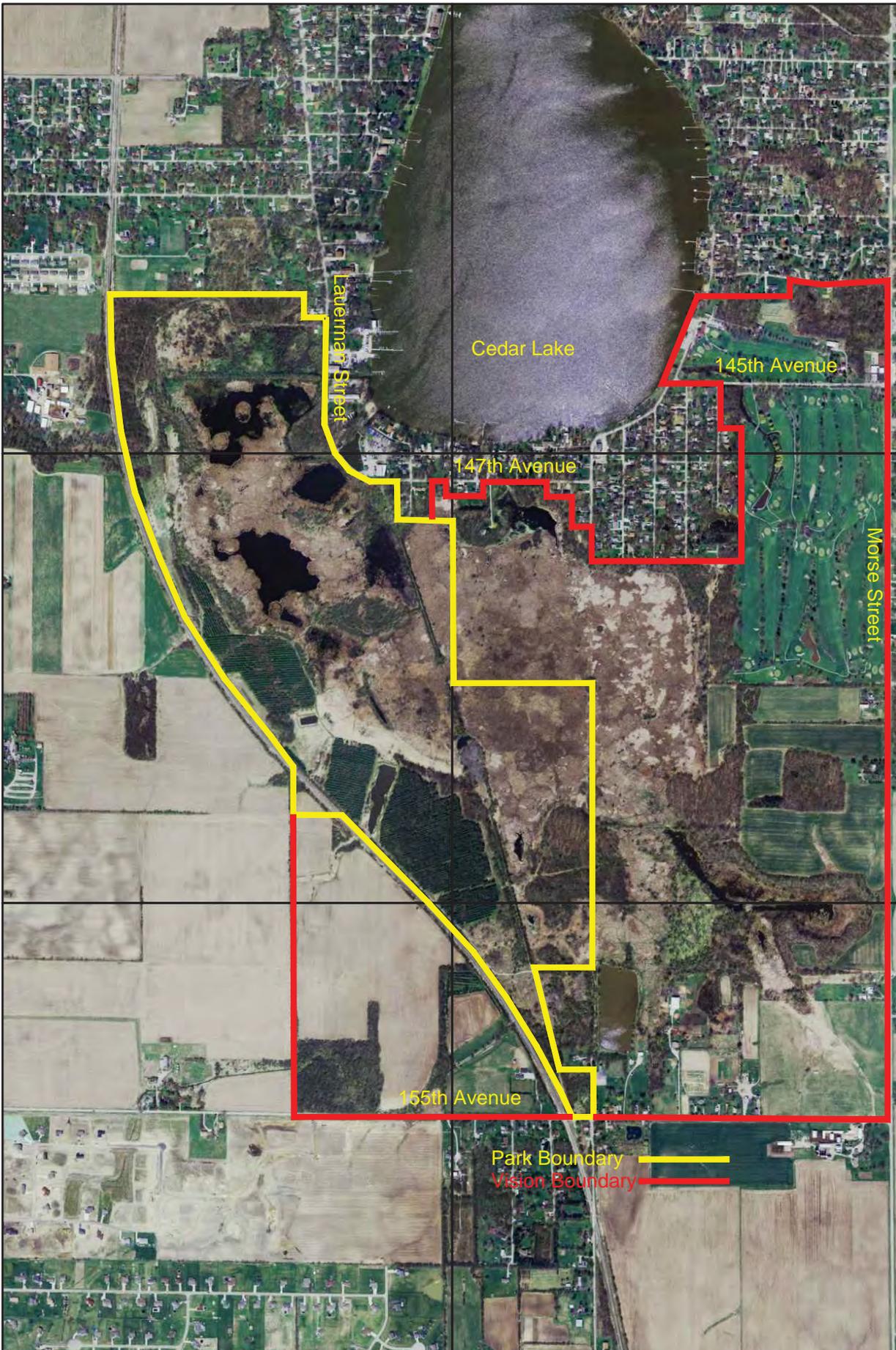
- Existing Parks & Facilities
- Vision Plan Elements & Facilities
- LCPRD Trail
- Non LCPRD Trail

1. Whihala Beach Park Site
2. Gibson Woods Nature Preserve
3. Lake Etta County Park
4. Three Rivers County Park
5. Oak Savannah Trail
6. Oak Ridge Prairie County Park
7. Erie Lackawanna Trail
8. Turkey Creek Golf Course
9. C & O Trail
10. Deep River County Park
11. Lake Hills Park Site
12. Beaver Dam Park Site
13. Cedar Creek Golf Course
14. Bull Run Park Site
15. West Creek Park Site A
16. West Creek Park Site B
17. West Creek Park Site C
18. West Creek Park Site D
19. Lemon Lake County Park
20. Cedar Lake Marsh Park Site
21. Veterans Memorial Parkway Trail
22. Stoney Run County Park
23. Buckley Homestead County Park
24. Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park

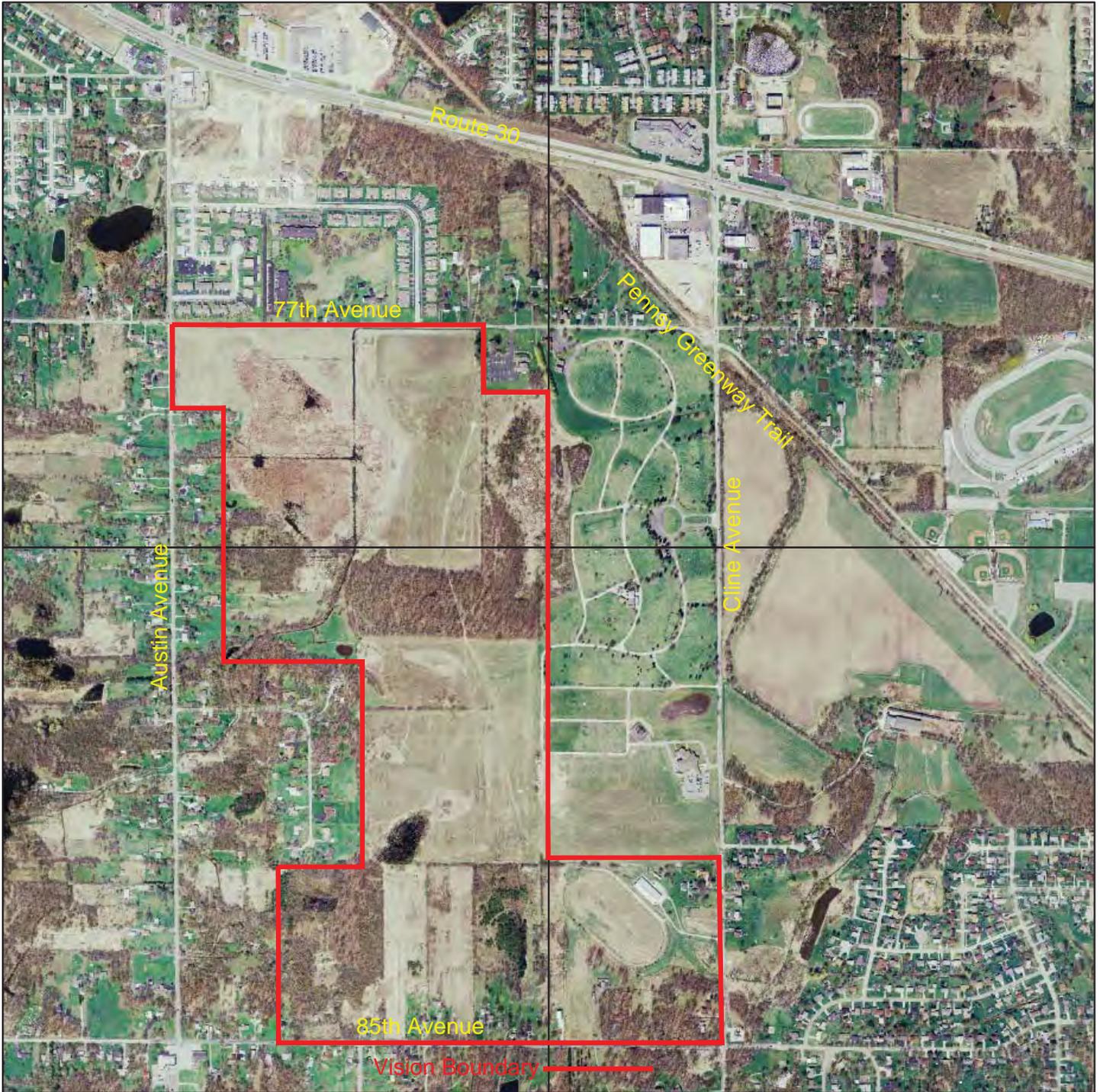




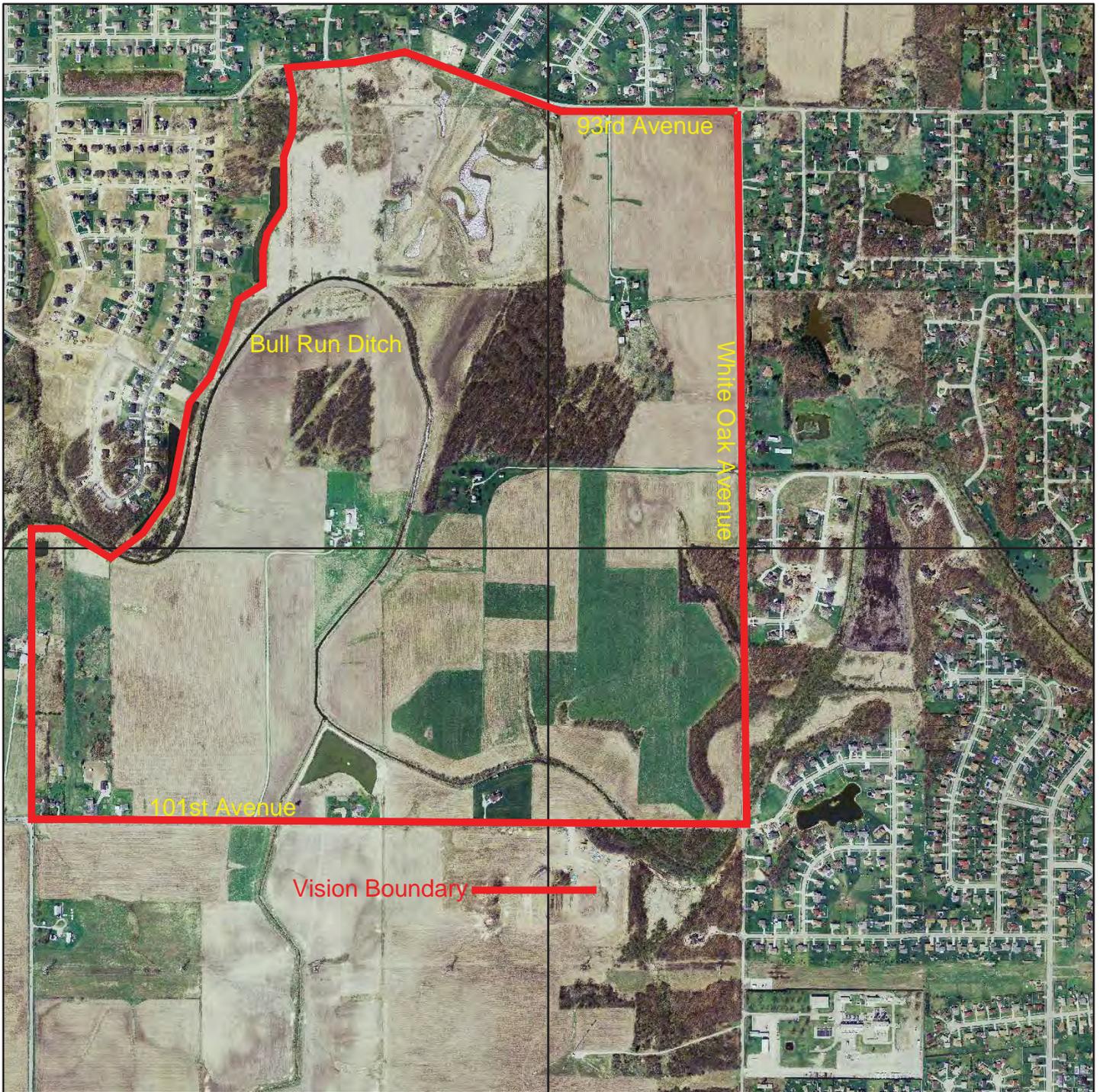
*Vision Map for Beaver Dam.*



Vision Map for Cedar Lake Marsh.



*Vision Map for Lake Hills.*

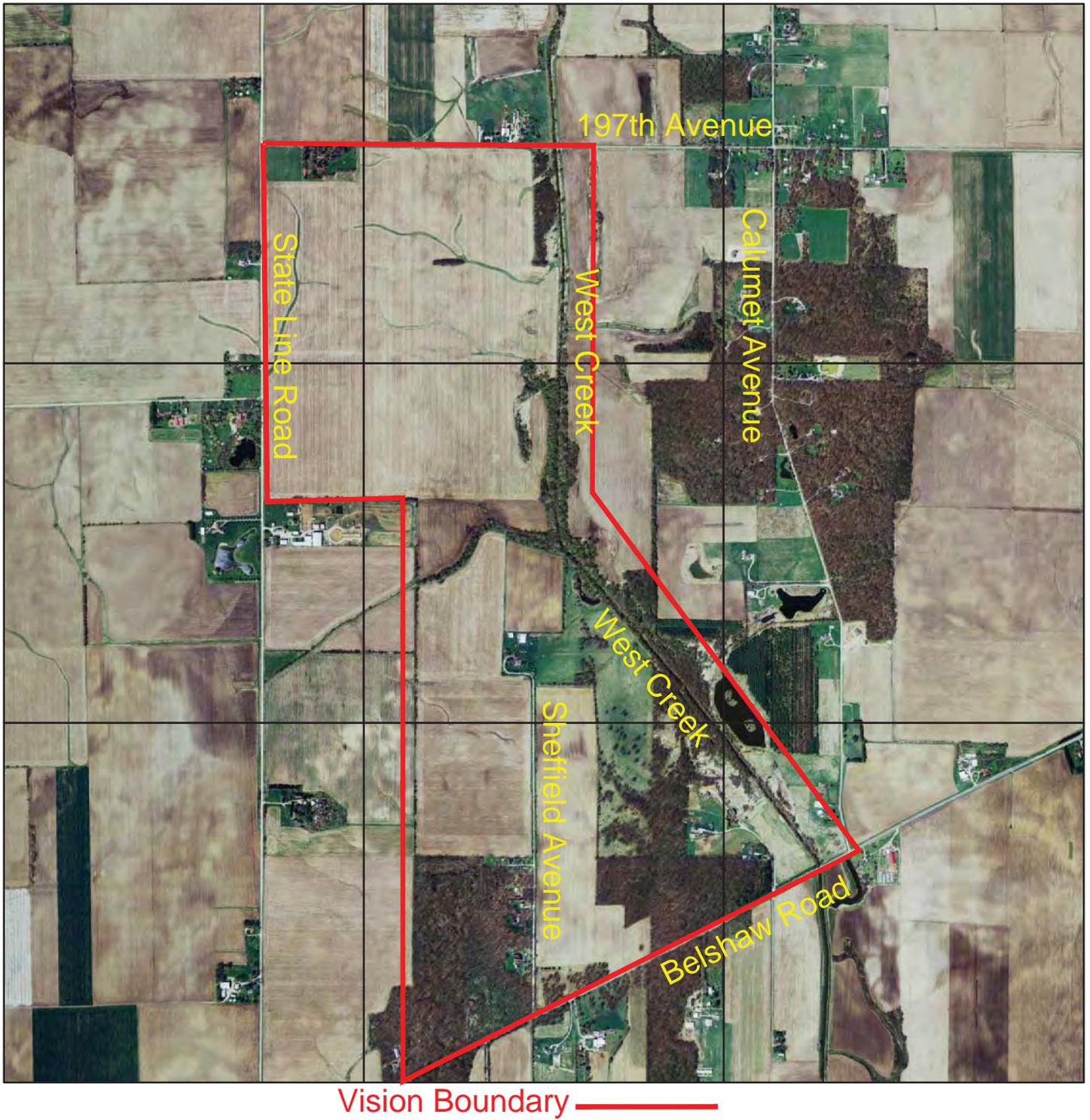


*Vision Map for Bull Run.*

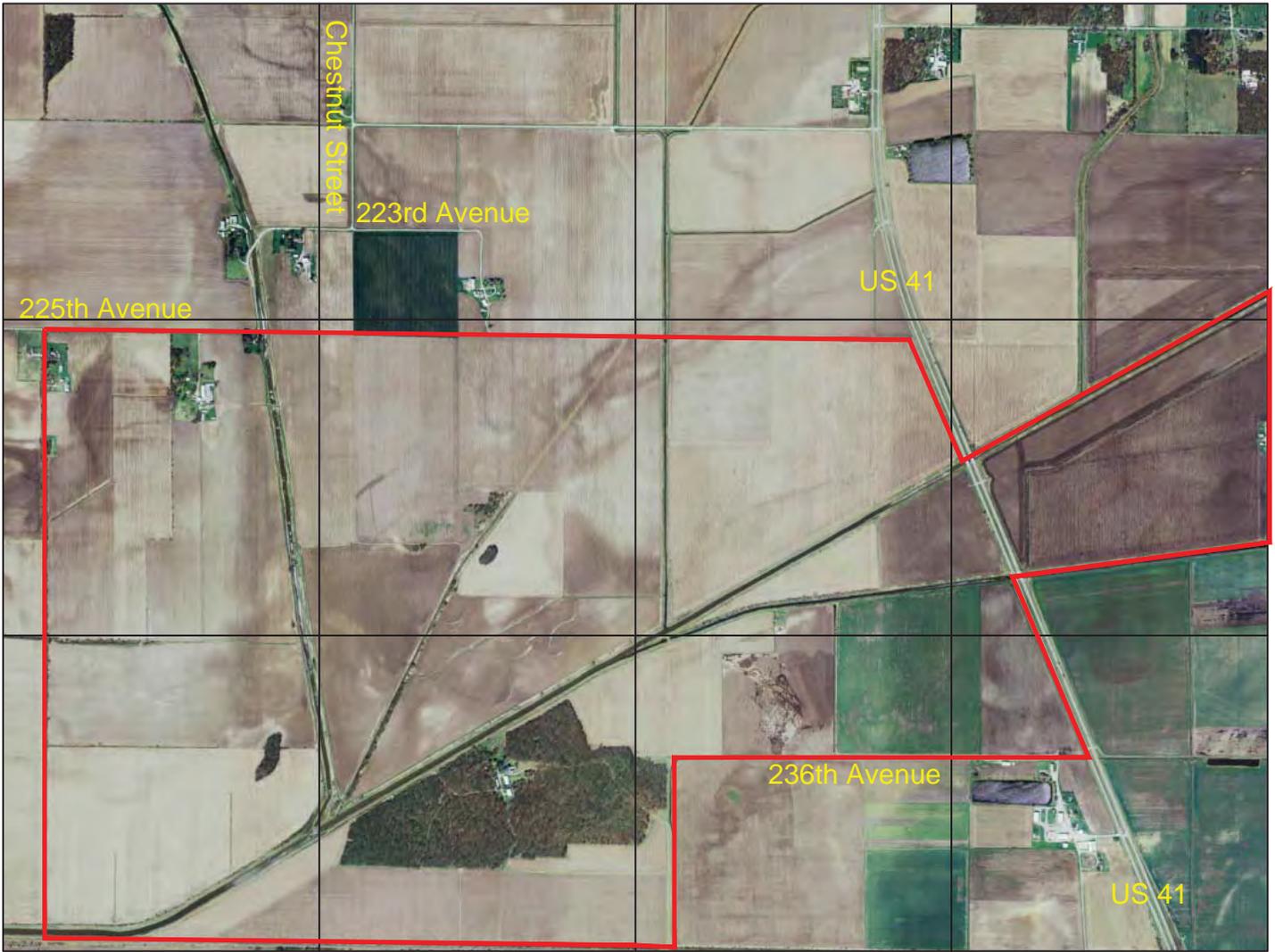


Vision Map for West Creek Site A.



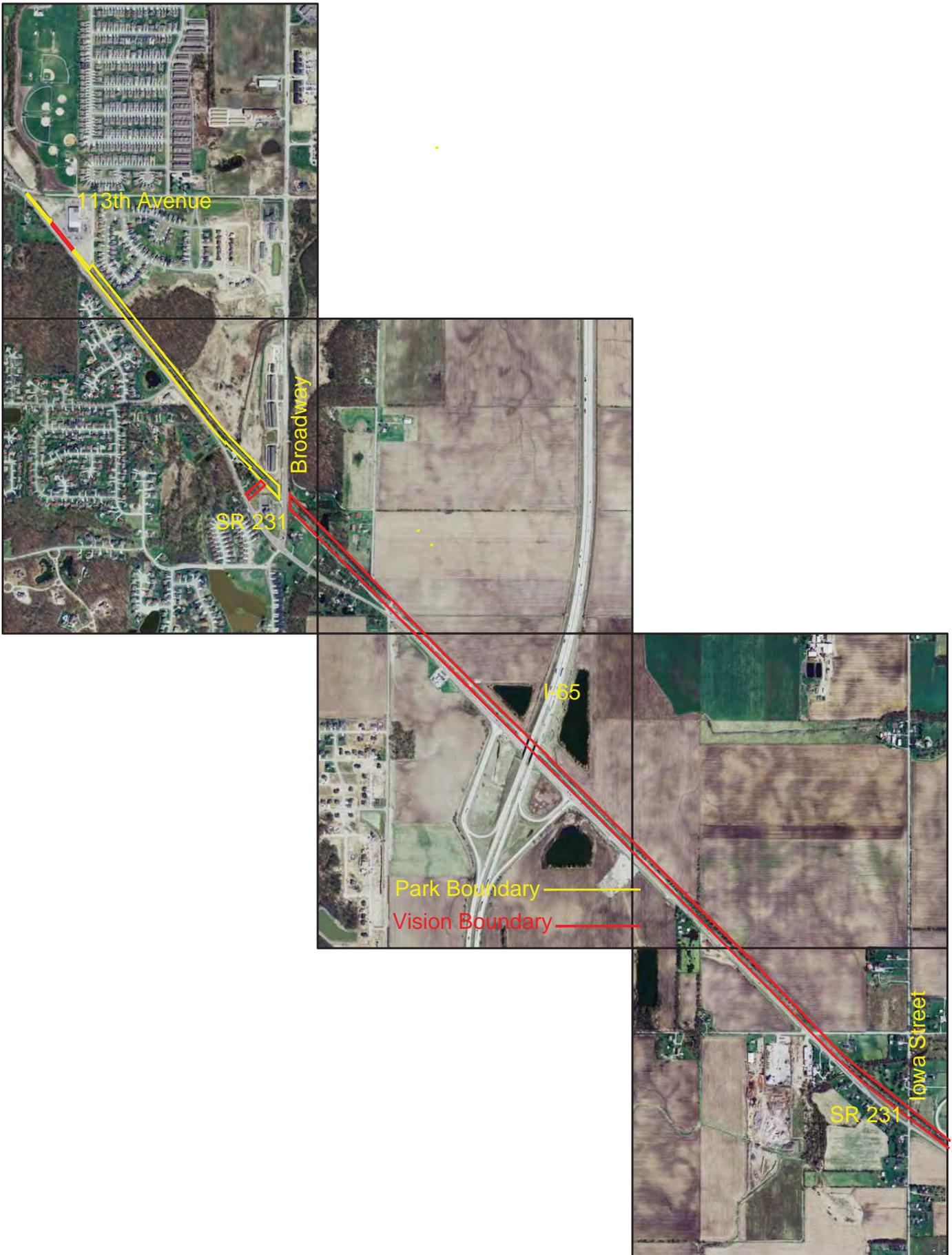


*Vision Map for West Creek Site C.*



Vision Boundary 

*Vision Map for West Creek Site D.*



*Vision Map for Veterans Memorial Trail.*



*Vision Map for Veterans Memorial Trail East.*





# CHAPTER 8

## CHAPTER EIGHT: POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The following is a description of potential funding sources the Parks Board may want to utilize. This list is not all-inclusive, and the availability, criteria, and deadlines may change from year to year.

### *Land and Water Conservation Fund*

In Indiana, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program is administered by IDNR, DOR. Since 1965, the LWCF program has been instrumental in land protection and outdoor recreation development. On a national level, the program helps to acquire land for the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the USDA Forest Service. The program also benefits state and local governments by providing 50 percent matching reimbursement funds for outdoor recreation and park land acquisition and facility development. The minimum grant amount is \$10,000 with a maximum award of \$200,000. There are two eligibility requirements: the applicant must be a town, city, township, or county park and recreation board established by ordinance under current Indiana Code and the park board must have a current IDNR, DOR approved five-year park and recreation master plan on file. Projects

eligible for LWCF include picnic areas, parks, water oriented activities, nature centers, trails, roads and utilities to support parks, and eligible design costs. For more information, contact the IDNR, DOR Grant Section Chief.

### *The DNR Shooting Range Grant Program*

The DNR Shooting Range Grant Program offers assistance for the development of rifle, handgun, shotgun, and archery facilities available to the public. Those eligible include all units of government and agencies incorporated as 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations that are open to the public at least 20 hours per month. The intent of the program is to train the public, hunter education, and provide additional safe places for target practice. Eligible projects include the development of backstops, target holders, field courses, classrooms, sanitary facilities, and accessible pathways. Land acquisition is not eligible for reimbursement under this program. Although not required, it is strongly recommended to have an approved five year master plan on file with IDNR, DOR when applying for assistance. For more information, contact the IDNR, DOR Grant Section Chief.

*Indiana Heritage Trust*

The Indiana General Assembly created the Indiana Heritage Trust (IHT) in 1992 to buy public natural areas from willing sellers. The program is funded by the sale of environmental license plates, general appropriations, and contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals. Representative projects include the purchase of properties that have examples of outstanding natural or cultural features, and provide areas for conservation, recreation, and restoration of native biological diversity. For additional information, contact the Indiana Heritage Trust.

*Community and Urban Forestry Grants*

The Community and Urban Forestry Program of the Division of Forestry of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources offers a variety of federal and corporate grants for urban forestry projects on public property. The dates for these grants and projects funded are dependent on type and levels of funding. For more information about funding for urban forestry projects, visit the IDNR's webpage.

*Transportation Alternatives Program*

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) authorized under Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) legislation provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for the planning, design or construction of boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. Program details are not yet available.

# CHAPTER 9

## CHAPTER NINE: PLAN EVALUATION & UPDATES

On a yearly basis, it is recommended that the Parks Board review and evaluate progress that has been made on the Parks and Recreation Plan. This is necessary to help the Parks and Recreation Board maintain the ability to provide quality services and facilities. A periodic review of the master plan and the consideration of continual public input will help determine where to focus efforts and help to determine future projects.

Sometimes, there are unforeseen circumstances that may change the priorities of the five year planning period. If this happens, a plan amendment may be submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation (IDNR, DOR). Formal amendments to the plan are only required if they involve projects proposed in grant applications requiring a five year plan. These amendments must be approved in writing by IDNR, DOR planning staff. Plan amendments will not extend the five-year eligibility of the master plan. Plan amendments submitted to IDNR, DOR for the purpose of adding or modifying a community's future grant project must be submitted and approved by IDNR, DOR staff prior to the grant

program's application deadline. To amend the master plan, the following items must be submitted to IDNR, DOR:

1. A brief explanation of the reason(s) for the amendment.
2. Documentation of the public input which went into the amendment process.
3. The new plan pages, containing any changes or additions.
4. A resolution passed by the parks board adopting the plan as amended. This will make the revised plan an official document of the parks and recreation board.

This Parks and Recreation Plan prepared for the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board is current for the years 2014-2018. To remain eligible for grants through IDNR, DOR after 2017, the Parks Board must prepare an update and submit a draft to IDNR, DOR by January 15th, 2019 and a final draft by April 15th, 2019.