

Indiana County Pennsylvania



Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan

May 2006





Acknowledgments

The contributions of the following agencies, groups, and individuals were vital to the successful development of this Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan. They are commended for their interest in the project and the input they provided throughout the planning process.

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Document Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Summary highlights the key findings of the inventory, results of the public participation process, and recommendations for the future of recreation, parks, and open space in the County.

INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of Indiana County and its residents. This community background provides a context for the development of this Plan.

CHAPTER 1: **INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT**

This Chapter provides an inventory and assessment of the recreational opportunities, parks, and open spaces in the County.

CHAPTER 2: **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Public input was a key component in the development of this Plan. This chapter describes the public participation process and summarizes the results of each venue of participation.

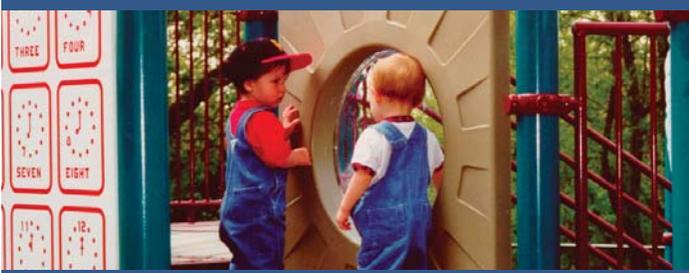
CHAPTER 3: **VISION AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The public participation process culminated in the Vision and Goals for the future of recreation, parks, and open space, which will guide future efforts. Along with the Vision and Goals, the inventory, assessment, and public participation components are utilized to outline recommendations for the future of recreation, parks, and open space in the County.



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Executive Summary

Parks and recreation play a critical role in providing a quality of life that attracts residents, businesses, and economic activities to communities.

Recognizing the importance of parks and recreation to the County, this Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Plan was initiated. The process used to develop this Plan included extensive public input, detailed inventory and assessment, and the development of recommendations for the future of parks and recreation in Indiana County.

When planning for the future of parks and recreation in Indiana County, it is important to develop an understanding of the County as a whole. Information on demographics and community resources gathered through the County Comprehensive Planning process provided a context within which this Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Plan was generated. A familiarity with this information ensures the development of a plan that is realistic, sensitive to current issues, and tailored to this unique County.

Input received through the public participation process was an important asset as viable recommendations for the future of parks and recreation were developed. The public input process included public meetings, close work with a project study committee, distribution of a recreation questionnaire, and key person interviews.

The public participation process culminated in the development of Vision and Goals for the Future of Parks and Recreation in Indiana County, which can be found on page 3.



The inventory of recreation facilities included all County and Municipal recreation areas within the County. All inventories included notation of number of facilities and their size and condition. Additionally, the current administration of the parks and recreation system was evaluated. The information was collected to create an overview of existing park and recreation conditions in the County. Professional assessment of the inventories and comparisons to current trends were completed.

This Study recognizes the tremendous importance of greenways and open space in Indiana County and addresses various components of each. The County's Comprehensive Plan, Natural Areas Inventory, and Greenways and Trail Plan will address this in much greater detail.

Drawing upon the public participation, inventory, and assessment, recommendations for the future of recreation and parks were developed. Some of the key recommendations are summarized following the Vision and Goals. Refer to Chapter 3 for additional information and detailed implementation strategies.

V I S I O N A N D G O A L S F O R T H E F U T U R E

Vision

Parks, recreation, and open space provide significant benefits to the County's high quality of life. Indiana County is dedicated to maintaining and improving the parks, recreation, and open space its citizens use and enjoy.

Goals

The County will work to **strengthen cooperation** among local communities, the county, state and federal governments, non-profit organizations, private landowners, businesses and other groups and individuals, in order to implement the strategies of this plan.

Provide and maintain a **comprehensive park and recreation system** throughout the County that will include local, county, state, and federal park properties.

Develop an **extensive countywide trail system** to include non-motorized, bicycling, hiking, and walking trails that run along side roads and streams and through the County's business districts, parks, neighborhoods and open spaces.

Support the efforts of local, regional, and state partners, both public and private, to implement an **interconnected system of greenways and open spaces that protect the natural environment**.

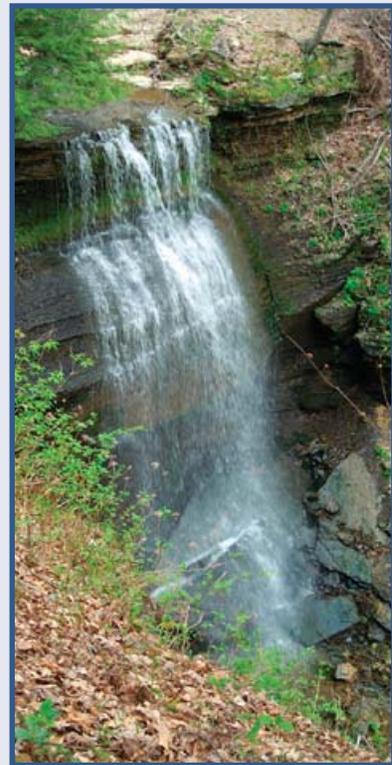
Provide the resources necessary to **maintain the Indiana County Parks and Trails system** as the foundation of the county system, providing regional parks and recreational opportunities for persons of all ages, interests, and abilities.

Aggressively pursue a **variety of funding opportunities** for additions, improvements and acquisitions to the county parks.

Capitalize on **opportunities for recreational and nature-based tourism**.

Advance the County's economy in a sustainable manner.

Promote active, healthy lifestyles for all Indiana County residents.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Complete a County Greenways and Trails Plan

Following adoption of this Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan, the County should proceed with the development of a County-wide Greenways and Trails Plan. Starting the Plan soon after completion of the Recreation and Open Space Plan will capitalize on the momentum of the recently-completed planning process. The Greenways and Trails Plan should build upon the information provided in this Recreation and Open Space Plan. It will outline a plan for the construction of trails, conservation of greenway corridors, and identification of opportunities for environmental education. The Plan will also provide a framework for the organization of local efforts throughout the County.

Conduct a County-wide Natural Areas Inventory

Indiana County should conduct a county-wide Natural Areas Inventory (NAI). The NAI provides some of the basis to determine areas within the County that are significant or unique natural resources. It would be best to conduct the NAI prior to the County Greenway and Trail Plan, as this inventory could assist in guiding the designation of greenway corridors.

Strengthen cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding recreational opportunities at Mahoning Dam

The spatial analysis of the County park service areas indicates that almost all of the County is served by one or two of the following parks: Hemlock Lake, Blue Spruce, and Pine Ridge. However, public input indicates that there may be somewhat of a deficiency of recreational opportunities in the northwestern corner of the County. To help fill this perceived need, there is an opportunity to strengthen cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the Mahoning Dam. The facility currently offers many recreational opportunities,

and the County should work with the Army Corps to increase awareness of the existing opportunities and explore the possibility of expanding the number and/or type of opportunities. The property is currently under agreement with the Pennsylvania Game Commission to be open for hunting. Additional public use would be subject to the standards of this program.

Increase awareness of Indiana County's recreational opportunities

Public input received during the planning process indicated a lack of awareness of recreational opportunities in the County. The County should work towards increasing awareness of the locations of county parks and the facilities available. The County should also collaborate with local municipalities and organizations to increase awareness of local recreational opportunities.

This may be done through promotion of the County Park website, distribution of park brochures, provision of informational programs to local organizations, and the placement of public service ads on local radio and television stations.

Develop Master Site Plans for Blue Spruce, Pine Ridge, and Hemlock Lake Parks

Completion of master site plans is recommended for Blue Spruce, Pine Ridge, and Hemlock Lake Parks. These plans will define the vision for future development within the parks.

Repairs and Replacement of County Park Playgrounds

A safety audit was conducted on all County playgrounds. The audit identified hazardous conditions that exist at each of the five playgrounds. Repair and replacement of these playgrounds should be a high priority.

Expand the Indiana County Parks and Trails Staff to Meet Current Needs

The Indiana County Parks and Trails include 2428 acres of parkland, trails and recreational facilities. Many of the facilities are high maintenance type facilities including trails, picnic areas, pavilions, waterfronts, restrooms, lodges, and playgrounds. In addition to regular maintenance of park facilities, the park staff does its own construction of small facilities including restrooms and pavilions within the parks. They also build, maintain, set-up, and remove all items associated with the Blue Spruce Christmas Lights Festival.

In recent years, the County has added twenty (20) miles of trails and 650 acres of parkland to the Parks system. With the parks and trails spread throughout the County, extensive travel time is needed to travel among the parks. All of these things combined require a fully staffed maintenance crew, with adequate funding, appropriate equipment, and sufficient supplies.

Additionally, the development of the regional trail system and its related management and financing has increased the financial needs of the Parks.

This study proposes that new staffing include:

- Two additional maintenance workers (one in the north and one in the south)
- Two seasonal trail maintenance staff
- A trail manager who would supervise and manage construction, expansion, and improvements to the regional trail system

We also propose that the existing Project Coordinator/ Park Naturalist position be changed to that of Assistant Director of Parks.

Develop, Adopt, and Fund a Capital Improvements Budget

Indiana County does not currently fund a long-range capital budget for the parks. Such a plan is needed to address the need for ongoing replacement of maintenance equipment, as well as improvement and expansions to the park system.

Much of the current maintenance equipment is worn and outdated. Many facilities throughout the parks are in need of repair or replacement. These include the hazardous play equipment at Blue Spruce and Pine Ridge Parks, the dam at Blue Spruce, and roads at Hemlock Lake and Pine Ridge Park. There are also a number of additional improvements that are needed at all of the parks. The parks also have significant plans to continue expansion of the regional trail system.

When considered as a whole, the financial commitment of such development and replacement is overly extensive. Under a capital improvements plan, the entire list of development, repairs and replacement is spread out and prioritized over a period of years. While the annual allocation may still be somewhat burdensome, it becomes much more realistic.

SUCCESS OF THIS PLAN

This Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan fosters the continued success of current achievements and presents new directions for the County to explore. Support for the implementation of these recommendations and a strong commitment to the use of this Plan as a guide for the future, will ensure a continued high quality of life in Indiana County for years to come.



PUBLIC SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

Residents' support of future efforts to provide recreational and open space opportunities within the County is critical to the future of a successful system. Immediately following the approval of this planning document, efforts should be made to properly publicize its findings.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Indiana County Commissioners and staff continue to show their commitment to a high quality recreation, park, and open space system. Commitment to funding future projects will greatly influence the success with which the recommendations of this plan are implemented. Alternative funding sources should be continually explored to supplement contributions of the County, local governments, and local organizations.



INVOLVEMENT OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

As the decision-makers within the County, local and County officials should be updated on a regular basis regarding the recommendations of this Plan, the status of implementation, public support, and related issues as they arise.



VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

A strong volunteer base will make a large contribution to the implementation of the recommendations found in this Plan.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL & INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

The successful development of a county-wide recreation, parks, and open space system will depend on the cooperation between local municipalities, between municipalities and the county, and with many local recreation agencies and organizations.

Introduction



Introduction

GOAL

The GOAL OF THIS PLAN is to provide an analysis of the current parks, recreational opportunities, and open spaces in Indiana County and make recommendations for their future.

Opportunities for fulfilling leisure activities are integral parts of a quality lifestyle. The purpose of this study is to provide an analysis of these opportunities in Indiana County and make recommendations for the future. In order to provide a complete view of current conditions, an inventory of significant recreation features throughout the County was conducted.

Recognizing the importance of a quality recreation and open space system, the County Commissioners approved the preparation of this Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan. The planning process included a detailed professional assessment, an extensive public input process, and development of recommendations for the future of parks and open space in Indiana County.

This Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan is designed to serve as a tool for addressing the current and future recreational needs of County residents and to establish a framework for the decisions that must be made in order to provide adequate recreation facilities and programs. This plan is broad in scope, encompassing a variety of issues pertinent to parks, recreation and open space in the County. It will lay the groundwork for the continued successful planning and development of recreational parks and programs.

Concurrently with this Plan, Indiana County is conducting its County Comprehensive Plan. The County Comprehensive Plan includes a variety of background data that has been used in the development of this Plan to understand the make-up of the County. This includes demographic and socio-economic

This plan will lay the groundwork for the planning and development of a successful recreation, park, and open space system.

statistics, cultural features information, natural resource data, statistical facts, and general background information.

Additionally, the County Comprehensive Planning process has analyzed and made recommendations concerning current and future land use throughout the County. The land use recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan will be valuable as the County

works to conduct its Greenway and Trail Plan. Readers of this report should refer to the County Comprehensive Plan to gain a better understanding of the background that supports this Report.

THE BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and recreation play a critical role in providing a quality of life that attracts residents, businesses and economic activity to communities. The economic benefits are quite clear, as businesses prefer communities with a high quality of life, including an abundance of open space and nearby recreation.

Environmental Benefits

- Clean water and air
- Preserve wildlife
- Reduce pollution
- Protect ecosystems
- Provide a place to enjoy natures' beauty



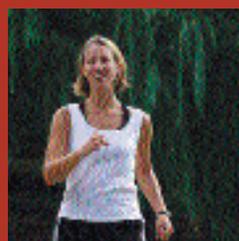
Economic Benefits

- Increase tourism
- Enhance land and property value
- Assist in business retention
- Generate revenue
- Reduce vandalism and crime

BENEFITS OF RECREATION, PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Community Benefits

- Reduce crime and delinquency
- Connect families
- Support youth
- Offer lifelines for elderly



Personal Benefits

- Reduce stress
- Increase life expectancy
- Create balance between work and play
- Eliminate boredom and loneliness
- Promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles
- Reduce obesity

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Indiana County's Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan will be a powerful tool in the County's effort to continually build and support a high quality recreation and open space system. The Plan will serve as a valuable resource in the following ways:

Guideline for the Future

The recommendations presented in this document offer a clear direction for future recreation, park and open space initiatives in the County. Detailed implementation strategies outline a step-by-step process for fulfilling this Plan's recommendations. The wide scope and short, middle, and long-term range of the implementation strategies assist in realistic planning for implementation. The detailed information provided will assist in setting financial goals and the appropriate allocation of needed County support.

Information Source

The broad scope of this Plan includes the documentation and analysis of a variety of issues pertinent to recreation, parks, and open space in Indiana County. The document will be a valuable resource of supporting information as the implementation strategies are completed, new strategies are developed, and documentation of existing conditions is needed.

Public Relations Tool

Residents have a perpetual interest in the growth of a high quality system of recreation, parks, and open space. This Plan will offer convenient, practical information for public consumption. Additionally, several of the key components could be used by the County or local organizations to garner support for proposed projects or funding assistance.

REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Several park and open space planning studies have been completed in recent years. The following is a brief review of these studies so that their findings can be incorporated into the efforts to implement this Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan.

Master Plan for Old Smicksburg Park

Prepared by Whit Watts, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1996

This document describes and illustrates a desirable and possible future for the development of Old Smicksburg Park, which is currently vacant Army Corps of Engineer property that is planned to become a community park. The program for the new park includes passive recreation, historic interpretation, and community accommodation. The property is currently under a long-term lease between the Corps and the Borough.

The proposed 40-acre park site at Old Smicksburg, which was founded in 1827, is the original site of present-day Smicksburg. This rural community sat in a valley in northwest Indiana County. When the Army Corps of Engineers decided in the 1930's to build a flood protection dam along the stream to protect the City of Pittsburgh, Old Smicksburg was covered with water. Nearly 70 years later, the waters have receded allowing the community to rebuild its history. Through an agreement with the USACE, plans are underway to restore the old community into a beautiful historic and recreation site.

Smicksburg Borough is in the early stages of implementing this Plan.

Top Ten Findings and Recommendations

- Internally, the park is to be developed in a manner that advances both historic interpretation and passive recreational activities. Externally, the park

will advance several design functions to the wider community.

- According to the PNDI, there are no known habitats for protected species on the site.
- Fishing opportunities are limited.
- ADA compliance can be readily accommodated without extensive or costly site work.
- One quarter acre of headwater wetland is located on the site but contained to an area that will not be disturbed by construction activities.
- Archeological investigations are ongoing and will be carried out under a memorandum of understanding.
- Conditions for obtaining a highway access permit can be met.
- Slope and soil conditions are generally favorable for recreational development but site drainage remains problematic.
- Proposed improvements are modest and limited to a small section of the park. The bulk of park acreage will be maintained in an undisturbed condition.
- The need for park maintenance and security can be minimized by concentrating improvements in a limited area subject to informal community surveillance.

Blacklick Valley Natural Area Resource Management Plan and Inventory

Indiana County Parks and Trails, 1996

A study of the Blacklick Valley Natural Area was conducted to determine appropriate management actions needed at this 675-acre site. The study indicates that the natural areas is a diverse site with an outstanding variety of plant and animal species that

are representative of the Blacklick Valley. The site also contains historic remnants of early agricultural activities and the 19th century iron-making industry.

Long Term Actions Needed

- Manage and operate the site to ensure that the “Articles of Agreement” between the County and the donors is being adhered to;
- Begin interpretive and educational programming to enable visitors to understand and appreciate the natural features of the site and their relation to the Blacklick Creek Valley;
- Ensure that the site is properly funded so that routine maintenance, safety, and security are provided at a sufficient level of support;
- Coordinate the operation, promotion and management of the site with other nearby attractions, especially the Ghost Town Trail, Eliza Furnace, and the Buttermilk Falls Natural Area;
- Conduct an on-going review of this management document to assure that the initial management recommendations have been implemented or are still relevant.

All of these recommendations have been completed

A Master Plan for The Eliza Furnace

Indiana County Parks and Trails, 1995

This master plan is the result of a research effort conducted by Indiana County Parks and Trails, IUP Archeological Services, the Eliza Furnace Planning Committee, and Thomas R. Harley, Architects. The study considers the requirements for establishing and operating the Eliza Furnace Historic Site. Preserving the Eliza Furnace, interpreting and educating the visitor about its significance, and helping in the economic development of the Blacklick Creek Valley through

heritage tourism are the major goals of the Eliza Furnace project. The scope of the plan has changed from this original Master Plan. Based on the changes, the project is near completion.

A Master Plan for The Ghost Town Trail

Indiana County Parks and Trails and Northern Cambria Community Development Corporation, 1992

Increasing recreational opportunities, preserving historic and environmental resources, and helping in economic development of the Blacklick Creek Valley are the major goals of the Ghost Town Trail project.

For the Ghost Town Trail to be implemented successfully, the following actions are needed:

- Increased awareness of the trail and its potential to help in improving the general quality of life for the Blacklick Creek Valley needs to be conveyed to the public, governmental agencies, and local governments.
- Improved support for the trail needs to be cultivated through the combined efforts of the Cambria and Indiana Trail Council and trail owners. Support for the trail can also come from trail users. Therefore, it is important that a minimal level of trail development be implemented, when possible, to establish a coalition of trail supporters and to demonstrate the potential of full trail development.
- Promotion of the trail through development of a revised trail brochure and other public relation efforts needs to continue.
- Coalitions between trail owners and others who are not aware of the trail and its potential for the Blacklick Creek Valley need to be established.
- Adequate funding to develop and operate the trail should be actively sought from a variety of funding sources.

- Development of the trail, or at least portions of the trail, needs to be undertaken in the short-term to maintain interest in the trail effort and provide a minimal level of support for current trail users.
- Formulation of a specific site plan or master plan for the Eliza Furnace should be initiated as soon as possible. The importance of the furnace to the trail, and the key role its interpretation can play in highlighting the industrial heritage of the Blacklick Creek Valley, warrants more extensive study of this natural register site.
- Assistance from agencies that can help in the environmental clean-up of the mine and water quality problems in the Blacklick Creek Valley should be sought by trail owners and supporters.
- Coordination between the trail owners, the Cambria and Indiana Trail Council, and local governments needs to be on-going so that the best interests of the trail are kept in the forefront.

Most of this Plan has been completed. As of 2005, there is one link west of Dilltown that remains unfinished. The trail currently totals 36 miles.

Indiana County Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan

In 1999, as part of a continuing professional development program with Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Geography and Regional Planning Department, the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development recruited an intern to begin preparation of a county-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan that would be incorporated into the transportation component of the Indiana County Comprehensive Plan. Activities completed for the Plan included background data collection, identification of major issues and concerns for bicyclists and pedestrians, and preliminary mapping depicting origins and destinations that should have bicycle and pedestrian

linkages. Upon termination of the internship, County planning staff resumed Plan development. The Indiana County Office of Planning and Development anticipates plan completion and adoption in 2005.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan is an element of the County's long-range transportation plan and is an important component of the County's overall strategy to create communities where livability and quality of life are esteemed.

Indiana County Bicycle and Pedestrian Vision

The citizens of Indiana County envision a community where the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are integrated into an overall transportation system that supports community needs and creates a livable community by promoting healthy lifestyles and neighborhoods through increased bicycling and walking; offers real transportation choices for all people, regardless of age, income, or ability; and permits people to walk or bike with confidence in a safe, attractive, healthy, and connected environment while carrying out everyday activities.

The plan is a policy document, which offers general principles to follow and provides policy and facility recommendations for improving bicycle and pedestrian conditions in Indiana County. These measures will play a significant role in reducing sprawl and congestion, encouraging physical activity, preserving open space, strengthening local businesses, encouraging downtown use, creating vibrant public spaces, and improving access to jobs, transit, and neighborhood amenities throughout the County.

Ultimately, it is a tool to use in achieving transportation goals beyond conventional, automobile-oriented transportation goals; to reap quality of life rewards

involving social, economic, cultural, and environmental benefits that will result from alternative transportation investments.

Blairsville Waterfront Greenway Master Plan

The Borough of Blairsville completed a Master Site Plan for this project in May 2005. The focus of this master plan is the 330-acre greenway bordering the Conemaugh River in Burrell Township, owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Located on the southeastern section of the site is the 25-acre WyoTech Park that includes a baseball field, softball field, and little league field. The Little League Fields (also known as Colt's Fields) are located in the southwestern portion of the site and include three little league fields and a practice field. Located in the northern section of the site is Waterfront Park, which includes a boat launch. All three parks are leased and managed by Blairsville Borough.

The proposed improvements for Blairsville Waterfront Greenway are estimated to cost approximately \$5,000,000. This study recommends that the proposed improvements be constructed in the following four phases, based on the financial capabilities of the Borough and the availability of grants:

- WyoTech Park - Improvements to existing ballfields, addition of a playground, environmental educational trail, BMX trail, camping area, put-in, and shelters.
- Trail System - Construction of a pedestrian and bicycle path connecting each park and existing regional trail system.
- Little League Fields - Improvements to existing ballfields, parking, and road alignment and the addition of a trail head and soccer field.
- Waterfront Park - Addition of a small amphitheater, parking and shelter.

Chapter 1



Chapter 1 Inventory and Assessment

Chapter One provides an in-depth inventory and assessment of parks and recreation opportunities available to Indiana County Residents. It begins by describing categories and types of parks, along with an overview of the National Recreation and Parks Association's (NRPA) hierarchy of parks and trails.

The chapter is then broken into two sections to provide detailed inventory and analysis of parks and recreation.

Section A deals specifically with the parks and recreation opportunities made available by the County through the Indiana County Parks and Trails.

Section B addresses all other parks and recreation providers within the County.

Within the region, Indiana County residents have access to a vast range of recreational opportunities.

PARKS AND RECREATION SERVING INDIANA COUNTY RESIDENTS

Numerous municipalities, organizations and entities provide public recreational opportunities for the residents of Indiana County. This report breaks these entities into four categories. They are, 1) County owned or operated facilities (Indiana County Parks and Trails, 2) local municipal parks and recreation, 3) regional parks, and 4) private recreation providers. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of these opportunities, it is important to understand the role that each plays in the County.

Indiana County Parks and Trails

Indiana County Parks and Trails is the parks department for Indiana County. The agency provides a wide variety

The function or use of a park depends on its size, location, and available facilities.

of County-owned or leased parks and trails. Most parks are natural resource or historic oriented facilities. They have developed two major trails that are part of a regional trail system that extends beyond the County boundaries. The parks and trail system is intended to serve residents of the entire County and beyond.

The Mission of Indiana County Parks and Trails is:

- to provide a park system that is responsive and directed by the needs of the people of Indiana County;
- to preserve, protect and enhance county park lands to improve the health of our people and the environmental health of our county;
- to advance our local economy in a sustainable manner;
- to invite and encourage individuals, families, schools, businesses and organizations to become partners in our efforts to invigorate and sustain the county's natural resources for future generations.

Their parks and trails include:

- Blue Spruce Park
- Pine Ridge Park
- Hemlock Lake
- Memorial Park
- Eliza Furnace Historic Site
- Tunnelview Historic Site
- Buttermilk Falls Natural Area
- Blacklick Valley Natural Area
- Ghost Town Trail
- Hoodlebug Trail

Local Parks and Recreation

Many municipalities throughout the County provide local recreation opportunities that are primarily intended for their own local residents. Most of these facilities are community parks that are designed to serve areas and neighborhood parks intended to serve areas within ¼ mile to about five-miles of the park. The parks include facilities such as ballfields, playgrounds, picnic shelters,

basketball, volleyball, and horseshoe courts, and short walking trails. This report identifies forty-seven local, municipally-owned parks and seven recreation sites with just a ballfield within the thirty-eight municipalities in the County. In addition to the local parks there are four community centers and an ice and expo center. These facilities are owned and operated by the local municipalities.

In addition to providing park and recreation facilities, some municipalities provide a variety of recreational programming as well.

Regional Parks

Regional facilities may be located within or outside the Indiana County borders. They include State Parks, Forests, and Gamelands; Federal Recreation Areas; PA Fish Commission Lakes, and; regional trails. These facilities are owned and operated by the state or federal governments, or public organizations.

Private Recreation Providers

These facilities are owned by individuals or companies in the private sector. They may be for profit or non-for-profit entities. In Indiana County they include the YMCA, Two Lick Reservoir, and Mack Park.

Other Recreational Facilities

Other recreation providers in Indiana County include those at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, numerous conservation and environmental groups, sportsman and outdoor recreation organizations, youth sports organizations, and local school districts.

HIERARCHY OF PARKS

The recommendations of this study, with regard to parks, are based on the premise that in order to provide the optimal level of service to County residents, recreation providers must understand and take into consideration the different ways in which people use

recreation facilities. The function or use of a park depends on its size, location and available facilities. Parks can be organized into a “hierarchy” which defines their functions and the types of activities they should be expected to accommodate. The NRPA defines a hierarchy in *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. The classifications are described in the following table.

NRPA PARKS AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASSIFICATION	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	LOCATION CRITERIA	SITE CRITERIA
MINI-PARK	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.	Less than a 1/4 mile in distance in residential setting	Between 2,500 sq. ft. and one acre in size.
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	Neighborhood remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on the informal and active and passive recreation.	1/4 to 1/2 mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optional.
SCHOOL-PARK	Depending on the circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable - depends on function.
COMMUNITY PARK	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and 1/2 to 3 miles distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 30 and 50 acres.
LARGE URBAN PARK	Large urban parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.
NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS	Land set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual/aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
GREENWAYS	Effectively tie park systems together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
SPORTS COMPLEX	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic facilities to larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community.	Strategically located community-wide facilities.	Determined by project demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal.
SPECIAL USE	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Variable - dependent on specific use.	Variable.
PRIVATE PARK/ RECREATIONAL FACILITY	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable - dependent on specific use.	Variable.

Large urban parks focus on meeting community-based recreational needs as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.

NRPA TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASSIFICATION	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	LOCATION CRITERIA
PARK TRAIL	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with the natural environment.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters. Type II: Multipurpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians and bicyclists/in-line skaters. Type III: Nature trails for pedestrians. May be hard- or soft-surfaced.
CONNECTOR TRAILS	Multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters located in independent r.o.w. Type II: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters. Typically located within road r.o.w.
ON-STREET BIKEWAYS	Paved segments of roadways that serve as a means to safely separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic.	Bike Route: Designated portions of the roadway for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Bike Lane: Shared portions of the roadway that provide separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists, such as paved shoulders.
ALL-TERRAIN BIKE TRAIL	Off road trail for all-terrain (mountain) bikes.	Single-purpose use trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas.
CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAIL	Trails developed for traditional and skate-style cross-country skiing.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas.
EQUESTRIAN TRAIL	Trails developed for horseback riding.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas. Sometimes developed as multipurpose with hiking and all-terrain biking where conflicts can be controlled.

The following pages provide an inventory and description of all parks located within the County, as well as those of regional significance that are located outside Indiana County. A map is included that shows the location of each facility.

Multi-purpose trails emphasize safe bicycle and pedestrian travel to and from parks and around the community.

**Section A:
Indiana County
Parks and Recreation**

COUNTY PARKS CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

By building upon and refining the NRPA standards, Indiana County has developed its own standards to help classify park and open space opportunities within the county. These park classifications will help guide future maintenance, development, and expansion of the park system.

The development and use of land and water resources for outdoor recreation depends to a great extent on their location and resource qualities. Classification of parks is useful to ensure that the management objectives of the county park system are being met.

The character of parks differs and the operation and management considerations of each park will also differ. Indiana County Parks and Trails are classified into the following classes:

- Undeveloped county parks
- Resource-oriented county parks (including natural areas)
- Recreation-oriented county parks
- Historic-oriented county parks
- Trails and Greenways
- Conservation Areas

Based on public input for this Study, this is an appropriate role for the County to play in providing parks and recreation opportunities.

The County's Park system includes nine parks and two trails as noted in the following chart.

Indiana County Parks	Size	NRPA Park designation/County designation
Blacklick Valley Natural Area	713 acres	Natural resource area/resource oriented
Blue Spruce Park	650 acres	Large urban park/resource oriented
Pine Ridge Park	635 acres	Large urban park /resource oriented
Buttermilk Falls	48 acres	Natural resource area/resource oriented
Hemlock Lake	205 acres	Natural resource area/resource oriented
Eliza Furnace Historic Site	2 acres	Special Use/historic oriented
Tunnelview Historic Site	16 acres	Special use/historic oriented
Memorial Park	2 acres	Special use/historic oriented
Buena Vista Historic Site	5 acres	Special use/historic oriented
Total Park Acreage	2268 acres*	

Indiana County Trails	Length	NRPA Trail Designation
Ghost Town Trail	20 miles*	Connector Trail
Hoodlebug Trail	10 miles	Connector Trail

*This total does not include the land acreage for the trails.

**The Ghost Town Trail includes an additional 16 miles of trails in Cambria County.

The Spatial Analysis of county parks found on pages 47 and 49 shows that there is a good distribution of County parks. This Plan recommends that the County develop greenway and trail plan that will help determine the demand and expectation for trails and greenways throughout the County.

In addition to analyzing the service areas of the Indiana County Parks and Trails, the Consultant has also compared the number of acres of County Parks per thousand persons of population in Indiana County with those of nine other counties in southwestern Pennsylvania. The following chart details that comparison. The chart shows that Indiana County has 25.3 acres of County Parks for every one thousand residents. This is the highest of all counties analyzed and four and one-half times as many as the average. The County's 2,268 acres ranks second only to Westmoreland County, which has over 2,700 acres.

The public input from this study shows that Indiana County residents are willing to support, and even demand, this amount of County Park land. There is also a willingness to acquire additional property for the specific purposes of development of trails, for the protection and preservation of natural and historic resources, and to provide protective buffer zones surrounding existing County Parks.

County	Population	County Park Acreage	Acreage per 1,000 Residents
Beaver	181,412	2,265	12.5
Butler	174,083	417	2.4
Clearfield	83,382	950	11.4
Cambria	152,598	71	0.5
Clarion	41,765	50	1.2
Armstrong	72,392	25	0.3
Indiana	89,605	2268	25.3
Somerset	80,023	0	0.0
Westmoreland	369,993	>2700	7.3
Jefferson	45,932	0	0.0
Average acreage per thousand residents			6.1

The following park classifications are designated by the *General Management Guidelines for the Administration of the Indiana County Parks and Trails System*.

Undeveloped County Parks

These include tracts of land or portions of existing parks which have been acquired for future use or development, but have not been master planned or taken on the character of a developed area. Low density recreation will be permitted to the point that the public's health and safety is accommodated or the resource is not endangered. Facility development is limited to only what is necessary until the site is master planned.

Resource-oriented County Parks

This classification includes land tracts of significant scenic or natural value. Parks in this class are retained for the preservation of these outstanding scenic or natural values, and as such, development should be carefully controlled to harmonize with the natural setting. Facilities or development should be limited to only that which is necessary.

Recreation-oriented County Parks

Parks in this class offer recreational activities that have countywide, rather than local drawing power and attract large numbers of groups or individual day-use. It is important that these parks do not offer recreational activities or duplicate services which are already being provided on the local level. These parks should be managed to provide maximum recreational opportunities for large numbers of visitors, but the natural character of the site should be maintained as much as possible.

Historic-oriented County Parks

Historic sites are established to protect and preserve objects, locations, and cultural features pertaining to Indiana County's history. Use of this type of park is

mainly by those persons seeking to interpret the unique character of the park, although recreation and facility development is permitted which is compatible with the park theme.

Trails and Greenways

Trails and greenways are established to protect and preserve linear corridors of open space. These areas may or many not contain a river or stream. Abandoned railroad corridors are also included in this category and present good opportunities to link together parks, natural areas, or recreation sites.

Conservation Areas

These are areas which have been acquired to enhance and improve the environmental or natural conditions of the site. Unlike natural areas, conservation areas usually contain land or water features which may have been significantly altered or degraded. The environmental remediation of these sites is the immediate management goal. Public use of the site is permitted to the extent that the public health and safety can be accommodated.

The following is a brief description and map (where available) of each County Park. Each facility is classified according to the NRPA Hierarchy of Parks and the Indiana County Parks and Trails Classifications. The classifications can be found in parenthesis under each facility name.

Blacklick Valley Natural Area
(natural resource area / resource oriented park)

Natural areas are set aside to protect both typical and unique plant and animal communities and to protect outstanding examples of natural interest and beauty. Facility development at the site has been minimized to protect the site's natural character.

The natural area is composed of three tracts:

- The **Parker** Tract is located south of Blacklick Creek and contains 300 acres. It includes a small parking area and six miles of hiking and cross-country skiing trails.
- The **Caldwell** and **Clarke Run** Tracts form a contiguous 413-acre parcel and lie north of Blacklick Creek. These northern tracts are undeveloped and do not contain established trails. The Ghost Town Trail bisects the property about one-half mile east of Dilltown.

Although the intent of this park is to maintain it as a natural area, some basic facilities would better allow visitors to enjoy and understand its natural beauty. A restroom, small pavilion, and self-guided walking trail would provide for both comfort and education.



Facility development at the site has been minimized to protect its natural character.

Blue Spruce Park

(large urban park/recreation-oriented park)

Blue Spruce Park is located six miles north of Indiana. The 650-acre park had been used for recreation in the early part of the 20th century and was established as a park in 1966.

The park has four pavilions and two lodges available for public rental. The pavilions seat groups of up to 250 people. Blue Spruce Lodge accommodates 100 people, and the Lakeside Center has an indoor capacity of 50 people, with additional seating on the deck area.

The park also includes two playgrounds, a volleyball court, horseshoe court, multi-use open spaces, and a 12-acre lake that is stocked with trout. There are also six miles of hiking and cross-country skiing trails.

Additionally, the Indiana County Master Gardener's Trial Garden is in the park near the Lakeside Center. The garden offers the opportunity for visitors to view the latest floral and plant selections from the Penn State Gardener's Select program.

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
BLUE SPRUCE PARK - 650 acres							
parking lots	3	fair	--	N	150 spaces	--	located near the entrance to the park; available for all facilities
pavilion #1	1	good	100' x 50'	N	48 shared spaces	w, ue	250 capacity; 2 grills
pavilion #2	1	excellent	25' x 20'	N		w, ue	40 capacity; 1 grill
pavilion #3	1	excellent	35' x 20'	N	12 spaces	w, ue	75 capacity; 1 grill
pavilion #4	1	excellent	25' x 20'	N	no access	w, ue	50 capacity; 1 grill
Blue Spruce Lodge	1	good	55' x 28'	N	60 parking spaces; no ADA	w, ue	100 capacity; fireplace
Lakeside Center	1	good	--	Y	36 parking; no ADA	w, ue	50 capacity
playground (pavilion area)	1	fair	--	N	14 spaces; no ADA	w	see playground audit
playground (lodge area)	1	fair	--	N	lodge parking	w	see playground audit
hiking/skiing trails	--	good	6 miles	N	at front of park	--	--
restroom #1	1	good	25' x 30'	--	--	ue	vault toilets
gazebo	1	excellent	42' circ.	N	shared with pavilions	--	--
restroom #2	1	excellent	15' x 15'	N	--	--	vault toilets
volleyball court	1	--	--	--	at front of park	--	--
horseshoe court	1	--	--	--	at front of park	--	--
lake	1	good	12 acres	--	at front of park	--	--

This 650-acre park has been used for recreation since the early 1900's.

Some outlying areas of the park are open to hunting. Most hunting takes place between October and December, but various seasons are open throughout the year.

The park is also the site of the annual Blue Spruce Park Festival of Lights during the holiday season.

Blue Spruce is the most used park in the County system. Its location, beautiful natural features, and attractive amenities draw tens of thousand of visitors each year. The park is home to a variety of programming sponsored by the "Friends of the Parks". Many organizations utilize the park for service projects, outings, family gatherings, scheduled events or just to relax. The park provides a nice balance of natural features and man-made amenities.

There are three facility deficiencies in the park that need to be addressed in the near future - repairs to Cummings Dam; playground replacement; and improvements and expansions to parking facilities.

Cummings Dam has been identified by the PA Department of Environmental Protection as needing significant repairs. Needed repairs include spillway reparation, installation of a membrane waterproofing system, and replacement of two sluice gate valves. Cost of repairs is expected to exceed \$1,000,000.

The two playgrounds in the park do not meet current safety standards. Specific safety issues are identified in the Playground Safety Audits included in this Plan.

The main play area by the lake can be modified or repaired to meet safety standards but should be scheduled for replacement within five to eight years. The slide that is built into the hillside is in need of immediate major repairs or removal.

The playground located near Blue Spruce Lodge probably cannot be repaired in an appropriate manner to meet safety standards. It should be scheduled for replacement within the next year or two.

There are insufficient parking facilities available for individual facilities within the park. Although there is a large parking lot at the entrance to the park, it is too far from most of the facilities to adequately serve them. Blue Spruce Lodge has sufficient parking but does not meet ADA standards. Parking for Pavilion #4 is shared with Pavilion #1, and parking is permitted along the park road. There are only sixty shared parking spaces for three pavilions, the gazebo and a playground on the lake side of the road. At maximum capacity, these facilities could have more than four hundred users. At least sixty more parking spaces are required for that number of users. Lakeside Center has about 36 parking spaces and should have sixty to seventy-five.

In addition to these three deficiencies, a number of other upgrades need to be made. Restrooms need to be expanded and updated, Pavilion #1 needs some rehabilitation and an updated electrical system, and the water system needs updated and expanded to all facilities within the park.

insert 11x17 Blue Spruce map

Pine Ridge Park

(large urban park / resource-oriented park)

Pine Ridge Park is located three miles east of Blairsville. The property for this 635-acre park was purchased in 1966, and the park design was created by students from Penn State's Landscape Architecture and Recreation Management Departments.

Much of the park is in a natural state. Tom's Run, a scenic mountain stream, intersects the park and offers trout fishing. A two-acre pond is available for catch-

and-release fishing. Several miles of hiking and cross-country skiing trails traverse the park.

The park features picnic tables, grills, playgrounds, restrooms, and two pavilions, which are available for rental. Pine Lodge is available for rental. A playground is located nearby.

The playground areas in Pine Ridge Park are in very poor condition. The Playground Safety Audit details each deficiency. All will need to be replaced very soon. Additionally, the Pine Lodge Road needs resurfaced and Tom's Run Road needs seal coated.

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
PINE RIDGE PARK - 635 acres							
Pavilion #1							
<i>Area A</i>							
shelter #1	1	good	20' x 28'	N	yes	ue	outlets; 1 grill
picnic grove #1	1	good	--	N	yes	w	grill; 2 tables
picnic grove #2	1	good	--	N	yes	--	grill; 3 tables
picnic grove #3	1	good	--	N	yes	--	grill; 2 tables
pedestrian bridge	2	good	--	N	--	--	--
<i>Area B</i>							
pedestrian bridge	1	good	--	N	--	--	--
grills	5	good	--	--	--	--	--
Tom's Run Playground	--	fair	--	N	not nearby	--	see playground audit
shelter	1	good	20' x 44'	N	--	ue, w	restrooms; 4 tables; 1 grill; outlets
volleyball court	1	good	--	N	--	--	grass
Pavilion #2 (Tom's Run Pavilion)							
shelter	1	good	80' x 30'	N	" "	ue, w	14 tables; lights
grills	4	good	--	--	--	--	--
playground	1	good	--	N	" "	--	for 2-5 year olds see playground audit
restrooms	1	good	--	Y	yes-paved	ue, w	--
Pavilion #3							
pedestrian bridge	1	good	--	N	--	--	--
shelter	1	good	17' x 27'	N	yes	--	3 tables; 1 grill
kiosk	1	good	--	N	--	--	--
Picnic Groves	5	good	--	N	--	--	--
Pine Lodge	1	good	--	N	yes	ue, w	kitchen; restrooms; activity rooms; observation deck; two stone fireplaces

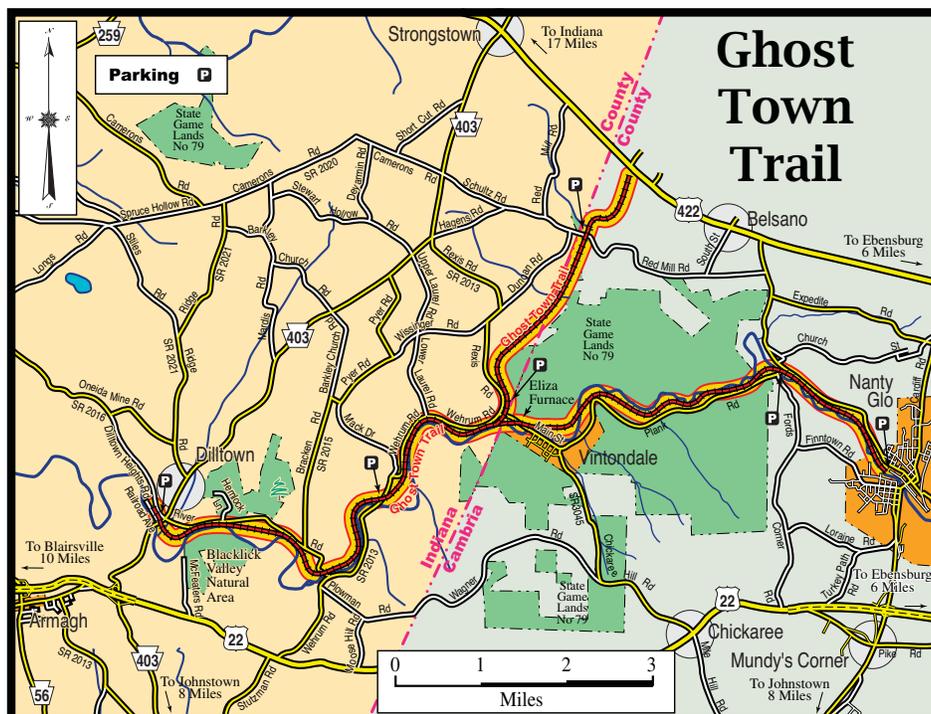
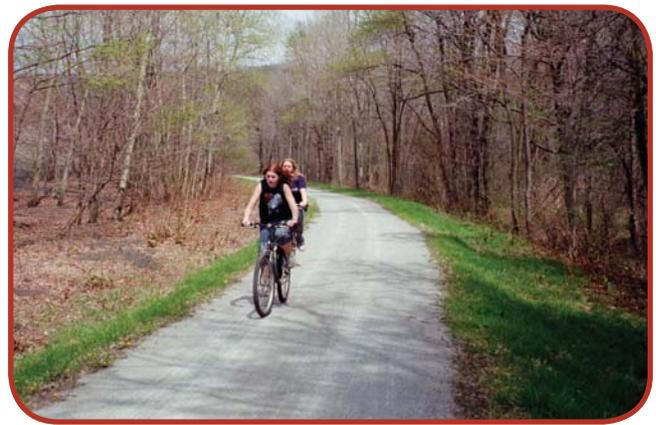
Ghost Town Trail (connector trail)

The Ghost Town Trail totals 36 miles in Indiana and Cambria Counties, Pennsylvania. It is designated by the U.S. National Park Service as a National Recreation Trail. In 1991, Kovalchick Salvage Company donated twelve miles of the former Blacklick and Ebensburg Railroad to Indiana County Parks and Trails. The railroad corridor is now a popular rails-to-trails project known as the Ghost Town Trail. In 1993, the Cambria and Indiana Railroad donated an additional four miles of railroad corridor.

Historical markers along the trail provide interpretive information about the Blacklick Valley's history. Eliza Furnace, one of Pennsylvania's best preserved iron furnaces, is located along the trail.

The trail offers hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing in the Blacklick Creek Valley. The trail is open year-round. There are three access areas in Indiana County (Dilltown, Wehrum, Rexis). Each access area provides parking and nearby restroom facilities.

Plans are in place to add a pre-fabricated, unisex restroom and laminated beam shelter along the trail, as well as to rehabilitate the bridge near Dilltown. A master plan for the trail calls for extending it westward from Dilltown to Saylor Park in Blacklick Township, where it will connect to the Hoodlebug Trail.



Hoodlebug Trail (connector trail)

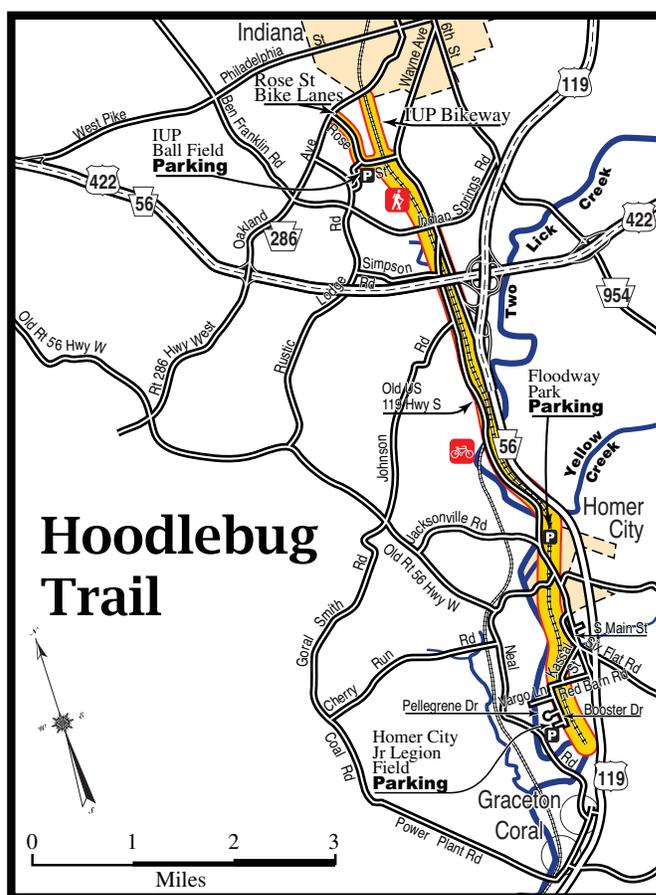
The Hoodlebug Trail is a ten-mile recreation and commuter trail located in the central portion of Indiana County. The trail passes through residential, commercial, and natural areas, providing access to many local residents and employees of several schools, industries, and small businesses.

The trail follows the abandoned Indiana Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad between the Homer City area and Indiana Borough. Hoodlebug was the local nickname for the self-propelled passenger coach that ran on the line until 1940. The corridor was also part of the Catawba Path, a Native American trail that extended from the Carolinas to upstate New York.

The Trail is open year-round for non-motorized activities, including bicycling, hiking, and cross-country skiing.

Plans are in place to extend the trail to Saylor Park in Burrell Township, where it will connect to the Ghost Town Trail, and then to Blairsville to connect to the West Penn Trail.

The trail master plan calls for the addition of a restroom facility and the completion of missing links along the Trail.



Indiana County Regional Trail System

The Hoodlebug and Ghost Town Trails are part of the Indiana County Regional Trail System. The Ghost Town Trail extends sixteen miles beyond the Indiana County border to Ebensburg in Cambria County. The Hoodlebug Trail will connect to the West Penn Trail as it traverses through both Indiana and Westmoreland Counties.



Memorial Park

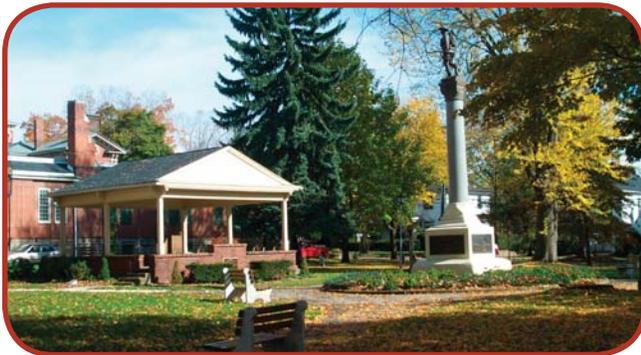
(special use / historic-oriented park)

The two-acre Memorial Park is the smallest of Indiana County's parks and is one of the most historic sites in the County. The park is located in Indiana Borough. Originally surveyed in 1774, the site was once a church cemetery. During the Civil War, the site served as a hiding place for travelers of the underground railroad.

The park's doughboy statue was erected in 1923 by a group of citizens led by Alex Stewart, father of actor James Stewart.

Memorial Park offers a shady retreat within Indiana Borough. A bandstand in the park is used for summer concerts and an annual Memorial Day program.

Memorial Park is in need of sidewalk repairs, lighting improvements, landscaping and tree work.



*During the Civil War, this site served
as a hiding place for travelers of the
underground railroad.*

Buttermilk Falls Natural Area

(natural resource area / resource-oriented park)

This Natural Area includes a 45-foot waterfall and scenic woodland. The site's 48 acres were donated to Indiana County Parks and Trails in 1995 by the Keystone-Conemaugh Group. The site was set aside to protect both typical and unique plant and animal communities and to protect outstanding examples of natural beauty.

Development at Buttermilk Falls is limited. The site currently includes a parking area, falls overlook viewing area, and a hiking trail. Buttermilk Falls is located in a remote part of the County.

In order to preserve and protect the falls and surrounding area, and the persons who visit it, trails should be improved to provide better visual access to the falls. Protective barriers should be installed to discourage visitors from wandering too close to the steep slopes near the falls. Comfort facilities such as a pavilion and restroom would enhance the quality of user visits. All facilities should meet ADA guidelines.



*This site was set aside to protect unique
plant and animal communities.*

Hemlock Lake
(natural resource area / resource-oriented park)

The park is located in northeastern Indiana County in Banks Township, ten miles south of Punxsutawney. Hemlock Lake Dam is 650 feet long and forty feet high at its highest point. The dam creates a 60-acre lake, which is 33 feet deep at its deepest point. The lake is stocked with fish.

Indiana County leases the site from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission as a public recreation area under a forty-year lease agreement that began in 1972.

The lake includes two boat launches. There are also areas for picnicking, nature study, photography, hunting, hiking, and fishing. Two pavilions are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The lease for Hemlock Lake will expire in 2012. County residents have become accustomed to using it as

a County Park. While Hemlock Lake serves the entire County, it is of particular importance to residents in the northeast section of the County. It serves as their primary regional and County Park. Commissioners should plan for the renewal of the lease.

The road within the park needs to be rehabilitated and a pedestrian bridge is to be constructed in the spillway trail area.



FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
HEMLOCK LAKE PARK - 205 acres (60 acre lake)							
East Side							
shelter	1	good	20' x 36'	N	yes - gravel	ue	outlets; 6 tables; 1 grill
restrooms	1	good	2 stalls	N	“ “	ue	--
picnic grove	1	good	--	N	“ “	--	5 tables
boat launch	1	good	--	--	“ “	--	--
fishing area	--	good	--	N	“ “	--	shelter table; 1 grill
West Side							
restrooms	1	good	--	N	yes	ue	--
boat launch	1	good	--	--	“ “	--	--
shelter	1	good	10' x 20'	N	“ “	--	--

This 60-acre lake is stocked for fishing.

Eliza Furnace Historic Site

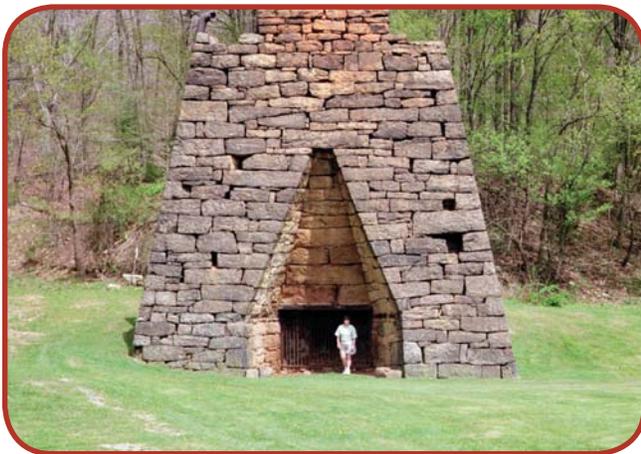
(special use / historic-oriented park)

The Eliza Furnace is a National Register site regarded as one of Pennsylvania's best preserved iron furnaces. It is one of only a few iron furnaces remaining in the United States which still retains its original heat exchanger piping. The Furnace was constructed in 1845 and 1846.

This two-acre site is leased to Indiana County by the Cambria County Historical Society.

The Furnace is located at the midpoint of the Ghost Towns Trail. Eliza Station is nearby, which has a restroom, picnic area, and water fountain.

Interpretive signage should be developed and displayed at the site.



Tunnelview Historic Site

(special use / historic-oriented park)

This 16-acre site is adjacent to the Conemaugh Dam in southwestern Indiana County. It contains significant remnants of transportation history.

A 900-foot portion of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal is visible at the site. A tunnel ran through Bow Ridge and the canal continued over a stone arch aqueduct over the river. This was the only site on the canal with an aqueduct and a tunnel next to one another. The canal operated until 1852. The tunnel was sealed off in 1952 as part of the Conemaugh flood control project.

By 1864, the Pennsylvania Railroad constructed a new tunnel and stone arch bridge. In 1907, the rail line was realigned and a stone arch bridge was constructed. This bridge still stands. It withstood the Johnstown Flood.

In 1952, the Pennsylvania Railroad realigned the rail line again and constructed the high level iron bridge standing today. A fourth tunnel was constructed through Bow Ridge in 1989 to deliver water to a nearby hydroelectric power station.

A pavilion, restroom, interpretive exhibits and a canoe launch are available at Tunnelview. There are also many recreational facilities at the nearby Conemaugh River Lake. The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy has made significant trail improvements at the site.



The Eliza Furnace is a National Register Site regarded as one of Pennsylvania's best preserved iron furnaces.

Buena Vista Historic Site (special use/historic oriented park)

Built in 1847, Buena Vista is named for the Mexican War battle fought in February of the year. The thirty-foot high furnace used local iron ore, limestone, and charcoal to produce approximately 400 tons of pig iron per year.

In 2005, the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County entered into a 99-year lease with the County for this 5.16 acre site. There are currently no facilities at the site, but visitors are permitted to view the furnace ruins. Plans have not yet been developed for improvements at the site. The site is located along the Blacklick Creek in Brush Valley Township, adjacent to the Ghost Town Trail.

COUNTY PARKS SPATIAL ANALYSIS

To help evaluate the level of service provided by Indiana County Parks and Trails, a Spatial Analysis was completed. There are no NRPA service area standards for county parks, so this analysis was based on input from the recreation survey completed as part of the public input process of this plan. Question number nine of the survey asked residents how far they are willing to travel to visit an Indiana County park. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they are willing to travel sixteen to thirty minutes and twenty-seven percent are willing to travel thirty to forty-five minutes. As an average, this travel time was estimated as a travel distance in miles. This travel distance was used to map service areas for each of the county parks that provides a variety of recreational opportunities. On the Spatial Analysis Map, fifteen-mile service areas are indicated for Hemlock Lake, Blue Spruce, and Pine Ridge Parks. These three parks are well distributed throughout the County, and their fifteen-mile service areas cover almost all of the County, supporting a conclusion that the number and distribution of Indiana County Parks and Trails are adequate.

insert spatial analysis map

ADMINISTRATION

This section addresses the administration of the Indiana County Parks and Trails. Administrative processes are generally not visible to the public but play a significant role in creating and managing how parks are provided to County residents. Included in the administration are discussion and analysis of the legal structure under which the department operates, general operations, intergovernmental cooperation, planning, personnel, maintenance, safety, and risk management.

Legal Structure

The Indiana County Board of Commissioners is ultimately responsible for the County Parks. The Commissioners oversee the Indiana County Parks and Trails Department, which has the general responsibility for management and operation of the County Park System.

Park Board

On July 7, 1967 the Indiana County Commissioners passed a Resolution creating the Park and Recreation Commission of Indiana County. The Board is to be comprised of five (5) members appointed by the County Commissioners to serve rotating terms that expire annually in each of five consecutive years. Through the Resolution, the Board is given the power to, “provide, conduct, and maintain public recreation areas, facilities and centers subject to all the responsibilities of the Recreation Enabling Legislation (of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.)

Additionally, the Resolution requires that the Board:

- appoint from its membership, Chairman and other such officers as it may deem necessary.
- make rules governing the operation and conduct of the recreational facilities operated by the Commission.
- maintain, operate, and supervise the public parks, playfields, and all outdoor and indoor recreation

- areas and facilities owned or controlled by the County of Indiana.
- make full and complete reports to the Commissioners.
- operate under a fiscal year that is the same as the County’s.

The Resolution authorizes the Commission to:

- adopt by-laws, rules and regulations covering its procedures not inconsistent with State laws.
- accept grants, gifts, bequests, or donations of services, equipment, real estate.
- appoint an executive director or superintendent.

The County agrees to appropriate an annual budget to the Commission that is managed and disbursed through the County finance. According to the introduction of the Resolution, the County is permitted by law to levy and collect up to 2 mils of tax for the purposes of financing recreation.

Based on a comparison of Indiana County’s Resolution with County Code, published by the Local Government Commission in 2000, the following inconsistencies were identified.

- The Recreation Board is permitted to have between five (5) and nine (9) members.
- The Board is now required to elect both a chair and a secretary.
- There is no longer a 2 mil limit on taxes levied for recreational purposes.

Additionally, it should be pointed out that the County Code includes enabling legislation for County recreation in several areas not included in Indiana County’s Resolution. These include provisions for acquisition of real property, joint action with local municipalities, indebtedness, collection of damages, and park police. The fact that they are not included in the Resolution does not preclude the County from taking action based on this legislation.

Over the years since its inception, the Parks and Recreation Commission of Indiana County has evolved into an organization that is somewhat different than the way it was created. In 2004, the Commission functions as an advisory board rather than as the operating commission for which it was originally created. The Commission's bylaws, adopted in 1996, are inconsistent with the Resolution that creates the Commission, and in some cases, with current enabling legislation.

The Advisory Board is the vehicle for general public input into County Park operations. The Board meets about eight times per year. The membership, appointed by the Commissioners, is comprised of persons who have specific interests in the Parks. While there is good representation on the Board, there is not a good cross section of the population represented. Historically, persons have been appointed to the Board for as long as they are willing to serve. Consideration should be given to selecting a broader representation of the County's residents. This should include persons representing a broad age range and an appropriate geographic distribution from throughout the County. Limiting the number of terms a person can serve will help to encourage new ideas and enthusiasm on the Board.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Indiana County works very closely with local municipalities providing planning and technical assistance, and assistance with grant writing for parks and recreation. This coordination comes primarily through the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development.

Indiana County Parks and Trails also cooperates with local municipalities by allowing use of County Park facilities, planning trails and trail connections, and by serving parts of the County where few local parks exist.

Additionally, there are written agreements between the County and other governmental organizations for the provision of parks and services relevant to the County.

The following identifies two of these agreements.

An agreement exists between Indiana County and the Pennsylvania Fish Commission for the maintenance and operation of Hemlock Lake County Park. The property is owned by the Fish Commission. The County has an agreement with the Commission to maintain and operate the property surrounding the lake through the year 2012. This agreement has allowed for a County Park to be located in the northeastern section of the County, where there are few parks available to County residents.

Mission

Indiana County Parks and Trails operate under the following recently adopted Mission Statement. Based on our analysis of the parks, and on comments received through public input, we believe the statement is adequate and appropriate.

- to provide a park system that is responsive and directed by the needs of the people of Indiana County
- to preserve, protect and enhance county park lands to improve the health of our people and the environmental health of our county;
- to advance our local economy in a sustainable manner
- to invite and encourage individuals, families, schools, businesses and organizations to become partners in our efforts to invigorate and sustain the County's natural resources for future generations.

General Operations

Indiana County Parks and Trails are maintained and operated by the County's parks department. The Parks and Recreation Commission of Indiana County, which was established in 1967 to manage the County parks now serves in an advisory capacity to their maintenance, operation, and expansion.

The Advisory Board is the vehicle for general public input into County Park operations.

Day-to-day operations are managed by the Park Director, Project Coordinator and two park supervisors.

Basic functions of the Indiana County Parks and Trails include:

- maintenance, upkeep, and security of existing parks
- development of facilities within existing parks
- planning, acquisition, and development of new trails, parks, and facilities
- scheduling park facilities
- coordinating programming with outside organizations
- managing and operating the Christmas Festival of Lights
- creating partnerships that can help in enhancing and carrying out the functions of the Indiana County Parks and Trails

Programs are operated throughout the park by cooperating organizations.

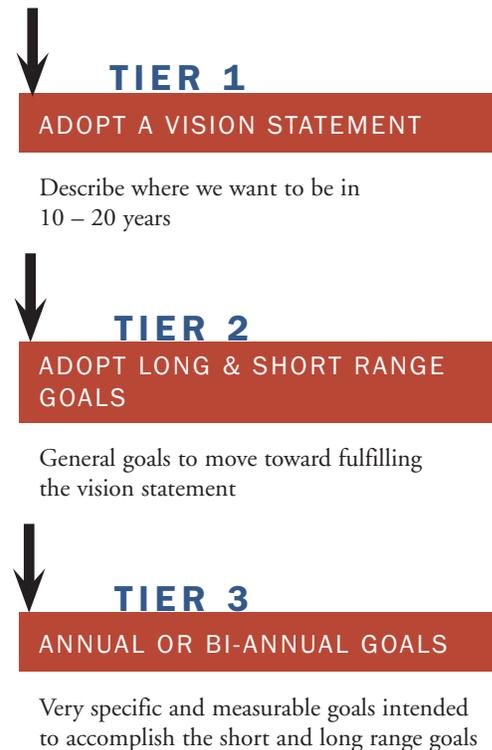
Parks and Recreation Planning

There is no formal system of planning for the parks. As greater demands have been placed on County facilities, County officials have begun to recognize the need for a more formal planning system. This Plan will lay the groundwork for future planning efforts.

Three Tier Goal Setting System

One example of a formal system of goal setting would include a three-tier plan. The first tier would be the adoption of a written vision statement for the department. Within that vision, the department should adopt a series of both long and short-range goals (tier two) and then create annual or biannual goals (tier three) to be accomplished within those parameters.

THREE TIER PLANNING DIAGRAM



Each level becomes more clearly defined. The vision statement is intended to be very broad-based and forward-looking. Annual goals are developed to accomplish the implementation strategies of this plan, while the long and short-range goals are created to fulfill the agency's vision. All goals should be clearly defined and measurable. It is necessary to continually evaluate and update goals on an annual basis, and to revise long-range goals periodically.

Adoption of this Plan provides a vision statement, along with goals and implementation strategies. Using the above stated system, the department would need to annually prioritize and adopt the strategies and goals of the plan, thus moving toward the fulfillment of the vision statement.

Marketing

One of the greatest deficiencies identified by the public was the lack of information about County Parks, and a significant confusion about what the County owns and operates, as opposed to that which is operated by others. Indiana County Parks and Trails uses its website as its primary venue of marketing. The website provides a comprehensive description of the Indiana County Parks and Trails.

The website describes the County Park system, its operation, and administration. A brief description of its purpose and mission are also included.

The site includes a listing of all County Parks with a description of facilities and services available at each. A map and written directions are included for each County Park. The site also describes plans and progress for individual park and trail development projects.

The website provides a detailed picture of the Indiana County Parks and Trails.

Brochures are available at the County Park office and in each park describing each of the parks as well.

Despite these marketing attempts, the general public still feels they do not know enough about the parks and their available facilities and programs. This seems to indicate that additional marketing efforts are needed to inform the public about the parks.

Opportunities for Public Involvement

The existing Recreation Advisory Board is perhaps the strongest vehicle for public participation. The Recreation Advisory Board is intended to serve as the conduit to bring input from the public to the County Commissioners. However, County residents are always welcome to express their views at County Commissioner meetings as well.

The Recreation Advisory Board should utilize their role as representative of the residents to serve as an advocate for parks and recreation with the County Commissioners. Other possibilities the Recreation Advisory Board may employ include park and program evaluation forms, public input sessions at the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meetings, public meetings to discuss plans and goals of the Board, and/or questionnaires.

Other agencies in the County (e.g. Indiana Area, Homer Center, Blairsville) also have parks and recreation boards which provide opportunities for public involvement. The County should share ideas on public input techniques with these agencies and collaborate on input efforts, where appropriate.

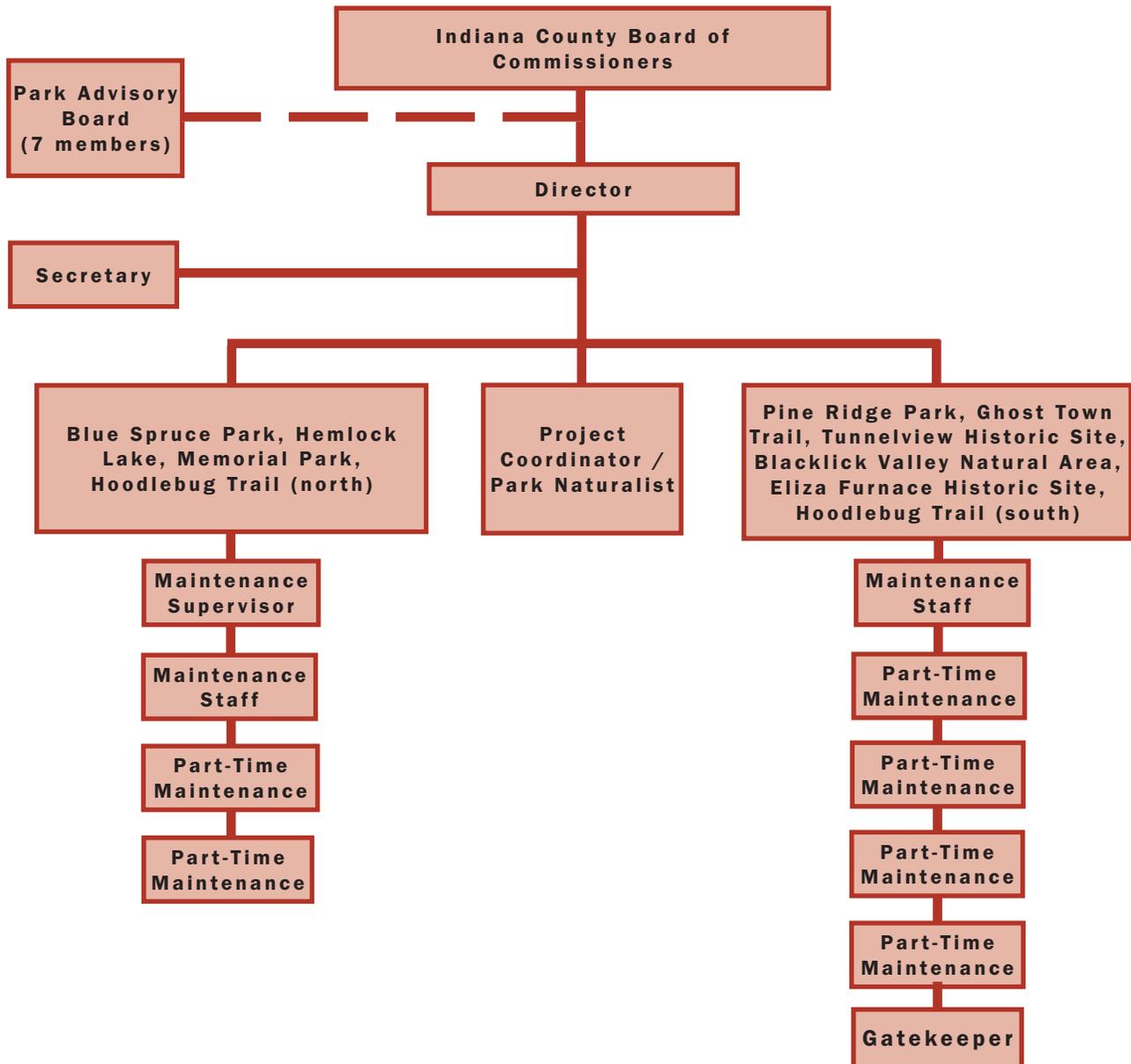
Personnel

Indiana County Parks and Trails full-time staff includes the Park Director, Project Coordinator/Park Naturalist (currently vacant), Secretary, two Maintenance Supervisors, and three Maintenance Staff. Additionally, the County employs several part-time and seasonal staff that includes maintenance workers and a Gatekeeper at Buttermilk Falls Park. The Park Director reports to the Indiana County Board of Commissioners. Other staff report to the Park Director.

The full-time maintenance and clerical staff are unionized through the AFSCME. The collective bargaining agreement between the County and the Union governs most personnel issues for them. The non-union supervisory staff fall under the County's personnel policy.

The following organizational chart shows the relationship among all staff.

INDIANA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Maintenance

The Indiana County Parks and Trails are all very well maintained. Numerous comments were received through the public input that the parks crew does an excellent job. The consultant analysis supports that observation.

The Parks Director administers the maintenance functions of the 2428 acres of Indiana County Parks and Trails. For the purposes of maintenance, the County is divided into two sections. The northern section includes Memorial, Blue Spruce, and Hemlock Lake Parks. The southern section includes Pine Ridge Park, Eliza Furnace, Ghost Town and Hoodlebug Trails, Blacklick Valley and Buttermilk Falls Natural Areas, and Tunnelview Historic Site. A supervisor and two laborers are assigned to the maintenance of northern section. A supervisor and one laborer are assigned to maintenance of the southern section. As many as six seasonal staff are hired for summer maintenance.

As the parks have grown to include additional facilities and new trails, the staffing and maintenance funding has generally remained the same. The current staff of five is now finding it very difficult to keep up with routine and long-term maintenance. The level of care required to maintain first-rate facilities and the continual adding of new facilities is stretching maintenance staff beyond their capabilities.

Included in the 2428 acres of parkland are approximately twenty-two miles of multi-use trails, two lakes, three waterfront areas, three boat/canoe launches, three lodges, twelve picnic pavilions, twenty-one parking areas, eleven restroom facilities, five playgrounds, five sports fields and courts, fifteen picnic groves, and three historic and natural sites. These types of facilities are considered by the American Park and Recreation Society to be high-level maintenance facilities.

The following are typical examples of high-level maintenance activities:

- Turf care - cutting grass every 5 working days
- Litter control - litter pick up and removal 2-3 times per week
- Restroom maintenance - maintained every 1-2 days
- Picnic pavilions - cleaned and maintained 2-3 times per week
- Playgrounds -safety inspections and maintenance 1-2 times per week
- Multi-use trails - cutting grass every 5 working days, weekly trail inspection and maintenance

In addition to the regular maintenance tasks conducted in the parks, the staff does most of the construction of small facilities, such as restrooms and pavilions, within the parks. They also build, maintain, set up, and remove all items associated with the Blue Spruce Christmas Lights Festival (15% of staff time).

In the past several years, the parks have added 20 miles of trails and 650 acres of land to the park system. No additional staff has been added for maintenance of these facilities.

Because the parks are spread throughout the County, significant travel time is incurred in accessing the parks. A person traveling to all of the County Parks would travel about 180 miles.

Based on the typical activities for maintenance of the kinds of facilities within the system, the construction work completed by the maintenance crew, the lights festival, the new trails, and travel distances, the Indiana County Parks and Trails maintenance staff should consist of:

- Two supervisors (same as current)
- Four to five maintenance laborers (adds 1-2 new laborers)
- Two seasonal trail maintenance staff (new staff in addition to the typical seasonal help)
- A trail manager who would supervise and manage construction, expansion, and improvements to the regional trail system (new position)
- Six seasonal staff (same as current)

Maintenance Equipment

The park maintenance department has the equipment necessary for proper maintenance of their facilities. However, much of the equipment is old and wearing out. The five trucks used by the parks range in age from ten to nineteen years old. Most other equipment is of the same age.

The inventory indicates the following equipment is available to the parks department - four pick-up trucks, a dump truck, a flail mower, two Gravely mowers with sulkies, two tractors, four Hustler riding mowers, a Toro Grounds Master, push mowers, a Rota tiller, stone rake, log splitter, air blowers, welder, air compressor, string trimmers, chainsaws, salt spreaders and snow plows, fertilizer spreaders, brush hog, radial arm saw, kerosene heaters, generator, hedge trimmers, shop vacuum, and other miscellaneous equipment.

It is essential for park maintenance equipment to be operating properly at all times. Proper equipment that is well maintained can save a tremendous amount of time and effort. Equipment that is old and outdated often creates additional work and creates down time for workers.

Security

The responsibility for security of all County Parks lies with the County Parks Department and the County Sheriff's Office.

The Parks Department manages the daily operations of the parks that includes the oversight of all activities and operations. This provides them the best insights concerning security issues.

The County Sheriff's Department is responsible for patrols to enforce the laws and regulations of the parks.

The County Sheriffs patrol the parks occasionally but are not available frequently enough to maintain adequate

protection. The Parks Department recently installed security cameras in one park to assist in controlling illegal activity. Park maintenance and administrative staff monitor the parks during times at which they are working there. Certain areas of individual parks have been secured by locks or fences. Residents have been asked to help with security by reporting vandalism and other illegal activities to either the Park or Sheriff's office.

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of both departments, security problems continue to exist. A more comprehensive plan needs to be implemented to assure better security in the parks. Through the public input portion of this study, residents have expressed concern about the lack of security within County parks. Several indicated that they have chosen not to use certain parks because of their perceived concern about security.

Safety and Risk Management

The safety audit of playground equipment shows numerous deficiencies in playground maintenance and addresses many safety issues. Playground facilities exhibit safety hazards ranging from low level hazards to very serious ones. These playground hazards are identified in the Safety Audit section of this report. Safety hazard reparations should be dealt with immediately.

Although Indiana County has a countywide risk management plan, it is not aggressively managed. The area of Risk Management needs to be addressed within the County Parks.

The Department should work with the County to develop such a plan. This would provide the County a proactive process to address safety issues and provide necessary documentation for problem areas.

The risk management plan should include documented safety inspections. By implementing a risk management

program, municipalities can prepare a defense against claims or lawsuits.

To prepare a successful risk management plan, one must consider five factors:

1. Develop a plan of action by identifying hazards, prioritizing them, and determining costs to correct those hazards. This plan should include routine playground safety audits. The higher the playground use, the more frequently a playground should be reviewed for safety hazards.
2. Address known problems by correcting hazards.
3. Take all action necessary to prevent accidents from occurring in the first place.
4. Implement proactive steps by providing adequate training, acting immediately on complaints, and repairing equipment only with parts provided by the equipment manufacturer.
5. Document all activities including written inspection reports and corrective actions.

FINANCING

Finances impact nearly every area of parks and recreation. They affect staffing, maintenance, programming, park development, and facilities. In order to understand the current state of the parks and recreation system and to lay plans for the future, it is essential to understand the financing. Financing levels and sources indicate existing priorities within the parks and recreation system. They also indicate how parks and recreation rank with other County services. The analysis of all financial aspects of the community that impact parks and recreation provide an indicator as to how the municipality can proceed in meeting its other priorities.

The major source of revenue for the Indiana County Parks and Trails is tax dollars provided through the County's General Fund. This accounts for ninety-three percent (93%) of the revenue. The remaining seven percent (7%) comes from pavilion and lodge rentals, gas well royalties and a number of miscellaneous sources. The County also receives significant grant funding for capital improvements. In recent years, these grants have been used primarily for the development of the regional trail system. Some donations have also been collected to match the grant funds. The total amount of grants and matching donations collected as of October 2003 was \$2,781,400 for regional trails.

The County also maintains two accounts separate from the General fund for the County Parks. One fund collects all the receipts from royalties on gas wells located in Blue Spruce Park. Recently this has amounted to approximately \$19,000 annually. These funds are typically used as the local match for grant funds and for capital improvements.

The second separate fund collects revenues produced by the annual Festival of Lights. The County Parks have operated this program since 1999, when they took it over from the Tourist Promotion Bureau. The program produces about \$23,000 annually in gate receipts and an additional \$2,500 from sales in the seasonal gift shop. These monies are used to offset the costs of the program.

With the exception of donations for individual park projects, there was little change in revenue from 1998 to 2002. Small increases in pavilion and lodge rental fees have increased revenues slightly in those categories. Donations have been collected for several specific projects including work at Memorial Park and on the Ghost Town Trail.

The County Commissioners have indicated a desire for the park to identify potential sources of new revenue and to increase revenues from existing sources. With the kinds of facilities and programs the County provides, it

INDIANA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS REVENUE								
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Average	5-Year Inc/Dec	% Change
General Parks-Gas royalties, vending	\$2,731	\$3,163	\$2,677	\$407	\$354	\$1,866	-\$2,377	-87.04%
Blue Spruce Park-Rentals, donations	\$18,430	\$16,931	\$24,339	\$18,365	\$19,540	\$19,521	\$1,110	6.02%
Pine Ridge Rentals	\$7,210	\$6,650	\$7,051	\$7,870	\$8,705	\$7,497	\$1,495	20.74%
Ghost Town-Rentals, maint. agreement	\$2,000	\$5,555	\$3,546	\$0	\$5,460	\$3,312	\$3,460	173.00%
Blacklick Natural Area-Rental	\$1,305	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$326	-\$1,305	-100.00%
Hoodlebug Trail-Donations	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,191	\$438	\$2,191	0.00%
Memorial-Donations	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,698	\$1,340	\$6,698	0.00%
Total Revenue	\$31,676	\$32,299	\$37,613	\$26,642	\$42,948	\$34,301	\$11,272	35.59%

is unlikely that sources of significant additional funding are available for general purposes. However, it is likely that the Parks could continue to raise local contributions for projects and further park development.

Currently, the largest source of revenue produced by the parks is through rental of facilities and royalties from gas wells. There is a plan to raise rental fees for the 2004 season. The increase in fees, however, will not provide a significant increase in total revenue.

Having sections of the County Parks timbered could produce additional revenue. Some of this has been done as a result of gypsy moth damage. This does not provide an income stream every year, but a program could be structured to timber sections of parks on a cyclical basis to provide revenues on an ongoing basis.

The rural character of the County is important to its residents. The rural County Parks have contributed to this character. Therefore, for nearly forty years, it has been the philosophy of the County to provide such facilities as a service to County residents. The belief has been that such facilities enhance the quality of life in the County and maintain the kind of natural features that County residents desire. This quality of life encourages existing residents to remain in the County and attracts new businesses and residents to move to Indiana County.

A detailed financial analysis helps to understand the history of revenue and expenses, evaluate trends and determine significant changes. The following pages include several charts detailing a variety of historical financial data for the Indiana County Parks and Trails.

These charts include:

- Indiana County Parks and Trails five-year revenue history
- Indiana County Parks and Trails five-year expense history
- Indiana County Parks and Trails five-year capital expense history
- Indiana County Parks and Trails grants revenue

- Detailed funding commitments for the regional trail system
- Two chart comparing Indiana County Parks and Trails wages with those of similar Counties
- Comparison of Indiana County's expenditure on Parks to that of other similar Counties

Based on these charts, we offer the following observations.

- The majority of funds available to the County Parks is provided by tax dollars.
- The County spent \$443,819 on County Park operation in 2002 (2.3% of total County expenditures).
- Average annual expenditures for County Parks operations from 1998 to 2002 were \$458,100.
- On average, the County recoups \$34,300 per year from park related revenue. This amounts to 7.5% of the average operating expenses.
- The overall park operating budget has increased by an average of 3% per year from 1998 to 2002.
- The Parks budget process provides an appropriate tracking and reporting system for both revenues and expenses.
- Wages have increased by 2.48% per year. Fringe benefits increased by 27.5%.
- Individual parks receive annual funding according to their needs. This is evidenced by the fluctuation in expenditures for Blue Spruce Park. It has received monies for various projects in appropriate years stretching the budget from a low of \$44,460 in 1998 to a high of \$137,064 in 1999, with an average of \$80,649.
- Wages for the Park Director, Maintenance Supervisor, and Project Coordinator are significantly below the median for similar PA Counties.
- Expenditures for conferences and education increased by 910%. This was to provide appropriate training for the Project Coordinator in new projects the County was undertaking.
- Indiana County is below the average in per capita expenditures for County Parks. In 2000, the average per capita expenditure among Counties

INDIANA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS EXPENDITURES								
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Average	5-Year Inc/Dec	% Change
General Parks								
Wages and Salaries	\$199,236	\$203,131	\$219,684	\$221,262	\$223,988	\$222,625	\$24,752	12.42%
Fringe Benefits, etc.	\$74,755	\$73,883	\$80,989	\$85,902	\$95,345	\$90,624	\$20,590	27.54%
Supplies	\$3,668	\$3,710	\$3,818	\$4,342	\$2,191	\$3,267	-\$1,477	-40.27%
Professional Services	\$14	\$0	\$0	\$90	\$0	\$45	-\$14	-100.00%
Communication	\$2,786	\$4,377	\$3,544	\$3,468	\$3,529	\$3,499	\$743	26.67%
Vehicle Lease	\$439	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-\$439	-100.00%
Advertising	\$3,432	\$3,157	\$2,158	\$1,384	\$2,741	\$2,063	-\$691	-20.13%
Utilities	\$2,512	\$706	\$734	\$960	\$818	\$889	-\$1,694	-67.44%
Repair and Maint. Service	\$741	\$725	\$435	\$1,098	\$596	\$847	-\$145	-19.57%
Dues, Subscriptions, Memberships	\$554	\$360	\$357	\$873	\$364	\$619	-\$190	-34.30%
Security	\$360	\$540	\$480	\$4,420	\$480	\$2,450	\$120	33.33%
Conference and Education	\$170	\$921	\$1,664	\$876	\$1,718	\$1,297	\$1,548	910.59%
Equipment Lease	\$400	\$1,834	\$1,131	\$0	\$2,705	\$1,353	\$2,305	576.25%
Individual Parks								
Blue Spruce	\$44,460	\$137,064	\$52,390	\$94,353	\$66,944	\$80,649	\$22,484	50.57%
Hemlock lake	\$396	\$1,610	\$2,098	\$1,497	\$761	\$1,129	\$365	92.17%
Pine Ridge	\$14,864	\$21,853	\$36,644	\$41,091	\$23,675	\$32,383	\$8,811	59.28%
Memorial Park	\$1,395	\$1,036	\$11,495	\$1,328	\$7,430	\$4,379	\$6,035	432.62%
Ghost Town Trail	\$15,804	\$6,135	\$4,133	\$4,565	\$5,175	\$4,870	-\$10,629	-67.26%
Tunnelview Historic Site	\$0	\$0	\$66	\$366	\$500	\$433	\$500	100.00%
Buttermilk Falls	\$0	\$0	\$512	\$672	\$416	\$544	\$416	100.00%
Blacklick Valley Natural Area	\$70	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	-\$70	-100.00%
Hoodlebug Trail	\$1,033	\$35	\$62,079	\$3,834	\$4,443	\$4,139	\$3,410	330.11%
Total Expense	\$367,089	\$461,077	\$484,411	\$472,381	\$443,819	\$458,100	\$76,730	20.90%
Net Income vs. Expense	-\$335,413	-\$428,778	-\$446,798	-\$445,739	-\$400,871	-\$423,799	-\$65,458	
<i>Per Capita Expenditure</i>	<i>\$3.75</i>	<i>\$4.79</i>	<i>\$4.99</i>	<i>\$4.98</i>	<i>\$4.48</i>	<i>\$4.74</i>		

Indiana County Parks and Trails 2002 Wages		
	Annual	Hourly
Park Director	\$38,377	
Project Coordinator	\$21,165	
Maintenance Supervisors (2)*	\$24,060	\$11.79
Maintenance Staff (3)*	\$19,471	\$9.54
Secretary	\$20,446	\$10.02
Part-time/Seasonal Maintenance Staff		\$5.15

*Average employee wages

A Comparison of Indiana County 2002 Staff Wages with those of Similar Counties		
	Indiana County	Median Wage
Park Director	\$38,377	\$44,167
Program/Project Supervisor	\$21,165	\$33,750
Assistant Parks Director	N/A	\$35,000
Park Maintenance Supervisor	\$24,060	\$32,500

Indiana County Parks and Trails Regional Trail Funding Summary (As of October 2003)		
Ghost Town Trail		
Kovalchick Salvage Company	Land Donation	\$150,000
C&I Railroad	Land Donation	\$17,500
SW PA Heritage Commission	Master Plan	\$25,000
PennDOT ISTE A Grant #1	Trail Construction	\$550,000
SW PA Heritage Commission	Trail Construction	\$191,500
Penn's Corner RC&D	Trail Construction	\$10,000
Ghost Town Trail - Red Mill Bridge		
PennDOT ISTE A Grant #2	Red Mill Bridge	\$517,600
SW PA Heritage Commission	Red Mill Bridge	\$51,800
PA DCNR	Red Mill Bridge	\$50,000
Ghost Town Trail - Misc. Projects		
PA Conservation Corps	Various trail projects	\$208,000
PA DCNR	Eliza Station	\$48,000
PA RTC Blazing Trails	Trail Shelters	\$6,000
Ghost Town Trail Total		\$1,825,400
Hoodlebug Trail		
PA DCNR	Land Acquisition	\$70,000
Senate Coal Company	Land Donation	\$70,000
PA DCNR	Master Plan	\$25,000
PennDOT TEA-21	Old 119 Underpass	\$300,000
PA DCNR	Old 119 Underpass	\$93,000
PA Conservation Corps	Trail Construction	\$50,000
PA DCNR	Trail Construction	\$48,000
In-Kind and Cash Donations	Trail Construction	\$300,000
Hoodlebug Trail Total		\$956,000
Grand Total		\$2,781,400

with populations between 41,000 and 138,000 was \$5.37 while Indiana County' per capita expenditure is \$4.99. Indiana County's 2002 per capita expenditure dropped to \$4.74.

- Indiana County spends \$188 per acre to maintain the approximately 2,380 acres of County Parks.
- Significant funding has been invested in the County's regional trail system. This is consistent with the desires of County residents who, through the public input process, ranked trails as the number one recreational need in the County.
- The County has received in excess of \$1,000,000 in grant funding for park and trail development since 1998.
- Less than \$100,000 was invested in capital improvements to existing County Parks between 1998 and 2002.

Capital Budget

Indiana County does not use a standard capital improvements plan. There is no projection of estimates, on a countywide basis, of what capital expenses will be needed from year to year. Capital items are presented to the County Commissioners each year for consideration and compared against available funding and projects from other departments. The Park Director keeps a current listing of capital needs including both

equipment and facilities. He uses this list to present needs each year to the Commissioners.

The Capital Improvements Chart provided earlier in this Plan shows a list of capital expenses incurred between 1998 and 2002. The greatest majority of those expenses was for the development of the regional trail system and does not address equipment deficiencies or needs for facility improvements in other County Parks.

A long-range capital plan for the parks is needed to address the condition of many of the maintenance equipment that is currently being used. Much equipment is worn and outdated. Additionally, there is a great need for replacement or repairs to a number of major facilities throughout the parks. These include the hazardous play equipment at Blue Spruce and Pine Ridge Parks, the dam at Blue Spruce, and roads at Hemlock Lake and Pine Ridge Park. There are also a number of additional improvements that are needed at all of the parks. When considered as a whole the financial burden of such development and replacement is overly burdensome. Under a capital improvements plan, the entire list of development, repairs and replacement is spread out and prioritized over a period of years. While the annual allocation may still be somewhat burdensome, it becomes much more realistic.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5-year Total
Parks - General	\$18,276	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$18,276
Blue Spruce Park	\$31,002	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$750	\$31,752
Ghost Town Trail	\$85,869	\$407,179	\$24,429	\$733	\$-	\$518,210
Hoodlebug Trail	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$232,974	\$7,354	\$240,328
Total Capital Expenditures	\$135,147	\$407,179	\$24,429	\$233,707	\$8,104	\$808,566

GRANT REVENUE						
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	5-year Total
Ghost Town Trail	\$79,992	\$387,166	\$45,443	\$29,256	\$-	\$541,857
Hoodlebug trail	\$-	\$19,812	\$27,842	\$209,816	\$102,246	\$359,716
PA Conservation Corps	\$-	\$4,975	\$-	\$20,929	\$11,279	\$37,183
Tunnelview Historic Site	\$5,210	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$5,210
Total Grant Money Received	\$85,202	\$411,953	\$73,285	\$260,001	\$113,525	\$943,966

A proposed capital budget is included in the implementation section of this plan addressing development, improvement and repairs to facilities. Additionally, the County should evaluate all of its existing equipment and develop a capital budget for future purchases.

Comparison to Counties of Similar Size and Nature in Pennsylvania

The following charts show how Indiana County compares with counties with populations between 41,765 and 138,687 that operate county parks departments. The data for these comparisons comes from two primary sources - the 2002 Budget and Salary Survey (Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, 2002), PA Department of Community and Economic Development Local Government Reporting Website. While an effort was made to compare Counties that are of similar size and nature to Indiana County, there are significant differences among all county parks departments. Record keeping and tracking procedures can vary greatly. Therefore, while this data provides information for comparison, additional analysis should be conducted prior to using it as a tool to justify significant changes.

Observations

Indiana County -

- Ranks below average in per capita spending for parks and recreation
- Expenditures on parks and recreation was second from the bottom in 2000
- Has significantly more parkland than most similar counties
- Has ten County Parks compared to the next closest with just two parks
- Is similar to other counties in that it provides primarily facilities rather than programming

Comparison to Counties of Similar Size and Nature in Pennsylvania				
<i>2002 Parks and Recreation Comparisons</i>				
<i>Counties with Populations under 150,000</i>				
County	2000 Population	Operating Budget	Per Capita Operations	Capital Budget
Carbon County	58,802	\$418,000	\$7.11	\$0
Clarion County	41,765	\$125,800	\$3.01	\$11,200
Armstrong County	79,000	\$594,000	\$7.52	\$46,600
Indiana County	89,605	\$446,798	\$4.99	\$60,000
Monroe County	138,687	\$588,600	\$4.24	\$0
Average	81,572	\$434,640	5.37	\$23,560

Source: Pennsylvania Recreation And Parks Association 2002 Budget and Salary Survey and the PA State Data Center

Facilities Provided						
County	Community Center	Nature Center	Outdoor Swimming Pool	Skate Park	Indoor Ice Skating Rink	Trails
Carbon County	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Clarion County	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
Armstrong County	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Indiana County	N	N	N	N	N	Y
Monroe County	N	N	N	N	N	N

County	FT Staff	PT Staff	# of Parks	Park Acreage	Primary Function
Carbon County	7	0	2	2,800	Parks
Clarion County	2	5	1	50	Parks
Armstrong County	7	5	2	25	Recreation Complex
Indiana County	8	6	10	2,380	Parks and Trails
Monroe County	6	0	1	11	Recreation Programming
Average	7	4	4	805	

Section B: Regional and Local Parks and Recreation

REGIONAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE INDIANA COUNTY

There are several regional recreation areas outside of Indiana County that are used by County residents. Specifically, the following state parks and state forests provide a variety of recreational and open space opportunities.

Keystone State Park

Keystone State Park is a multi-use park that offers year-round recreational opportunities. The 1,200-acre park is in Derry Township, Westmoreland County. The park includes a 78-acre lake.

Recreational opportunities include:

- camping
- boating
- ice fishing
- ice skating
- sledding
- cross-country skiing
- bicycling
- hunting
- swimming
- hiking
- picnicking
- wildlife observation
- fishing
- environmental education/interpretation

Forbes State Forest

The Forbes State Forest contains over twenty separate tracts of State Forest land in Fayette, Somerset, and Westmoreland Counties. Most of the Forbes State Forest lays along Laurel Ridge. The Forest totals over 50,000 acres in size. The forest includes six State Parks and three State Forest Picnic Areas.

In addition to the developed facilities, there are a number of undeveloped points of interest within the Forest.

Significant natural areas include:

- Roaring Run Natural Area;
- Mt. Davis Natural Area;
- Spruce Flats Wildlife Management Area

Gallitzin State Forest

The Gallitzin State Forest consists of two separate areas of state forest land located in northern Bedford, Indiana, and northern Somerset Counties. The total area of forest land is 15,336 acres.

Prince Gallitzin State Park

The 6,249-acre Prince Gallitzin State Park is in the scenic Allegheny Plateau Region of Pennsylvania. The main attractions to the park are the 1,600-acre lake and the large campground.

Recreational opportunities include:

- boating
- hunting
- picnicking
- fishing
- horseback riding
- swimming
- hiking
- cross-country skiing
- snowmobiling
- iceboating
- environmental education
- wildlife watching
- biking
- camping

Cloe Lake

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission lake is 25 acres. The lake sits within 150 acres of Commission property in Jefferson County, near Punxatawney, and offers fishing and boating for residents throughout the region.

Punxatawney Borough Facilities

Community Park

- pavilion
- horseshoe courts (2)
- tennis courts (2)
- 100' x 100' multi-use field
- playground
- swimming pool
- walking trail
- community center

Mahoning Shadow Trail

(Jefferson County Rails to Trails)

REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES WITHIN INDIANA COUNTY

Yellow Creek State Park

Yellow Creek State Park is located in southeastern Indiana County. It is over 3,000 acres and includes a 720-acre lake.

The Park includes three hiking trails totaling five miles. Laurel Run Trail is a 0.5-mile loop which starts at the park office. This easy hike is especially beautiful in the spring when wildflowers abound. Ridgetop Trail is a challenging 2-mile trail. It begins in the beach/day-use area and winds through a variety of habitats. Damsite Trail is a 2.5-mile trail that offers a view of the Yellow Creek dam.

The Lake's 800-foot beach is open from late-May to mid-September, 8 a.m. to sunset. Lifeguards are on

duty from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day, unless otherwise posted. A large, modern bathhouse, lifeguard/first aid building and a snack bar are in the beach area.

There are picnic tables and parking for over 4,000 people available near the beach. Three modern restrooms are provided in the picnic area. Pets are permitted in the day use area and must be controlled and attended at all times and on a leash or otherwise safely restrained. There are two smaller picnic areas. One is on the north shore near the North Boat Launch and the other is near the park office.

Five cottages are located along the lakeshore near McFeather's Cove. Each cottage sleeps five people in single bunks and double/single bunks. The cottages have wooden floors, windows, porch, picnic table, fire ring, and electric lights and outlets. Restrooms are nearby.

The Lake has boat launching ramps at the north shore, the south shore, at the beach/day-use area and a small launch in Grampap's Cove. A boat rental in the beach/day use area offers motorboats, canoes, rowboats, paddleboats, pontoon boats and small sailboats. Overnight mooring of boats is permitted in the park by special permit only.

Most of Yellow Creek State Park is open to hunting, trapping and the training of dogs during established seasons. Common game species are deer, pheasant, rabbit, squirrel, bear, turkey and waterfowl.

Many types of fish abound in Yellow Creek Lake. These include smallmouth and largemouth bass, walleye, muskellunge, northern pike, tiger muskellunge, yellow perch, bluegill and catfish. There is an accessible fishing pier on the north shore. Laurel Run, Yellow Creek and Little Yellow Creek are stocked with brown and brook trout and provide excellent trout fishing as well. An area along the breast of Dragonfly Pond is usable by many people with disabilities, and is also for children 12 years and younger. Access ramps and benches are provided.

Areas are available throughout the Park for many winter activities as well. These include snowmobiling, sledding and tobogganing, ice skating, ice boating, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing.

An environmental education and interpretation program is offered to the public from April 1st to October 31st each year.

Conemaugh Dam Federal Recreation Area

The park is owned and managed by the Army Corp of Engineers. It is known for the rich cultural remains found throughout the park. Primary sites of historical interest include traces of The Pennsylvania Mainland Canal and sections of the 1864 and 1907 railroads.

Public boating is limited on the lake due to lack of accessibility. Recreational opportunities include fishing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, picnicking, horseshoes, basketball, and site seeing. The West Penn Trail travels through the Park as travels along the Conemaugh River.

Mahoning Dam Federal Recreation Area

Mahoning Creek Lake is operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers. It is located in Armstrong County between Mahoning and New Bethlehem. Boating, fishing, hiking, camping, picnicking, and hunting are just a few of the recreational opportunities available at this site. The recreation area includes a playground, boat launch, picnic area, and restrooms.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission leases 1280 acres of project lands in Indiana County for wildlife management and public hunting. Hunting and trapping are permitted in all areas of the project except developed recreation areas and posted areas.

State Gamelands

There are hundreds of acres of state gamelands in Indiana County, which provide opportunities for residents to hunt and hike.

The gamelands numbers are:

- #174
- #262
- #185
- #248
- #273
- #276
- #153

REGIONAL TRAILS

West Penn Trail

Located along the former Pennsylvania Main Line Canal and Portage Railroad, the trail travels from Saltsburg to Westinghouse Trail Head near Blairsville. The twelve mile trail operated by the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy. I provides an important link to the Pennsylvania Main Line Greenway system.

Baker Trail

This 141-mile trail travels from Freeport to the Allegheny National Forest where it connects to the North Country Trail. It traverses farmland and woodland through Crooked Creek Park, the Mahoning Creek Reservoir area, Cook Forest State Park, and the Allegheny National Forest. A section of the trail passes through Indiana county in Armstrong, Washington, South Mahoning and West Mahoning Townships.

LOCAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

(community parks)

Facility Condition Evaluations

All local facilities are evaluated to determine their general condition. The following is a general description of each classification.

Good: Equipment given this ranking was installed or upgraded during the last 1-3 years. The equipment shows no signs of significant disrepair and no immediately visible safety hazards.

Fair: Equipment given this ranking appears to be several years old. The equipment shows some signs of aging and may present minor safety concerns.

Poor: Equipment given this ranking is in extreme disrepair and is in need of immediate upgrading or replacement.

Throughout Indiana County, residents enjoy many local recreation and open space opportunities in or near their communities. Forty-seven municipally-owned local parks, four community centers, and four “other” recreation facilities throughout the County were inventoried. As part of the inventory, all municipalities were asked to provide information about their local parks. This information was to include park names and sizes, a list of available facilities, general condition of facilities, size, ADA compliance, availability of parking, and available utility services. Items in the following inventory charts may be incomplete if the municipality did not provide all the requested information. Most communities were unable to provide accurate information about the acreage of individual parks. Because of the incomplete data, park acreages are not included in the inventory charts, and analysis was not conducted concerning park acreage.

This inventory is a comprehensive listing of recreational opportunities throughout the County. It will aid both the County and individual communities in assessing the current level of service and in providing information for grant writing.



insert local recreation facilities map

LOCAL MUNICIPAL PARKS INVENTORY

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
Shelocta Henderson Park							
baseball field	1	poor	200'	N	grass	none	--
basketball court	1.5	fair	50' x 42'	N	" "	" "	no court striping
2-bay swing	1	poor	4 seats	N	" "	" "	--
shelter	1	fair	30' x 20'	N	none nearby	none	1 table; 2 grills
parking lot	1	fair	15 spots	N	grass	--	--
Creekside Community Park							
shelter	1	fair	40' x 20'	N	5 spaces	electric (oh)	outlets; lights; 3 tables
slide	1	poor	--	N	--	--	--
1 bay swing	1	poor	3 seats	N	--	--	--
misc. play equip	--	poor	--	N	--	--	--
basketball court	1	fair	57' x 30'	N	--	--	missing hoop
benches	3	fair	--	N	--	--	--
Plumville Borough Park (2 sites)							
ballfield	1	fair	285'	N	8 spaces	electric (oh)	portable toilet
playground	1	poor			--	--	needs new equipment
basketball court	1	poor			--	--	
Marion Center Park							
gazebo	1	good	--	N	--	--	--
shelter	1	fair	35' x 40'	N	--	electric (oh)	7 tables
community building	1	fair	40' x 100'	N	--	water/sewer	restroom/kitchen
playground equipment	--	poor	--	N	--	--	--
ballfield #1	1	good	285'	N	--	electric (oh)	dugouts/concession
ballfield #2	1	poor	235'	N	--	--	dugouts
parking lots	3	fair	--	N	--	--	gravel
Clymer Ballfields							
ballfield #1	1	good	150'	N	--	electric (oh)	bleachers
ballfield #2	1	good	195'	N	--	" "	bleachers
concession stand	1	good	37' x 16'	N	--	" "	restrooms
gravel parking lots	2	fair		N	--	" "	
Clymer Sherman Street Park							
playground equipment	--	fair			on-street	--	--
shelter	1	good	70' x 42'	N	" "	--	lights; 12 tables
ballfield	1	fair	300'	N	--	--	dugouts
grills	2	fair	--	N	--	--	--
sandbox	1	fair	4' x 8'	N	--	--	--
restrooms	--	fair	--	N	--	water/sewer	--

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
Clymer Sample Run Playground							
shelter	1	good	25 x 25'	N	none	none	2 grills; 2 tables
volleyball court	1	poor	--	N	" "	" "	--
basketball	1	good	75 x 50	N	" "	" "	--
playground	--	poor	--	N	" "	" "	--
Clymer Lee Street Park							
basketball court	1						
playground	1						
picnic area	1						
Homer City Floodway Park							
baseball court	1	fair	--	N	--	--	--
softball field #1	1	fair	250'	N	--	none	no dugouts
playground	1	good		Y	--	" "	needs surfacing
softball field #2	1	good	283'	Y	--	" "	no dugouts
shelter	1	good	32' x 55'	Y	--	electric (u)	outlets; lights
exercise/walking trail	--	fair	--	N	--	--	--
restrooms	1	fair	2 stalls	Y	--	water/sewer	--
parking lot	1	fair	20 spaces	Y	--	--	paved
Homer City Memorial Park							
outdoor swimming pool	1						
Homer City Intown Park							
basketball court	1	fair					
tennis court	1						
playground	1						
open play field	1						
Armstrong Township Park							
ballfields	2	fair	265'	N	grass	electric (o)	--
shelter #1	1	good	26' x 13'	N	" "	--	5 tables; 1 grill
shelter #2	1	good	25' x 15'	N	" "	--	no tables; 1 grill
misc. play equipment	--	fair	--	N	" "	--	no safety surfacing
Young Township Park							
shelter #1	1	fair	15' x 15'	N	none	--	no floor
shelter #2	1	poor	15' x 15'	N	" "	--	used for maintenance
shelter #3	1	fair	40' x 33'	N	" "	w / s / oe	rest rooms
swings	1	poor	2 bay	N	" "	--	no safety surfacing
camping	1	good	6 sites	N	" "	--	elec. and water hook-ups
shelter #4	1	poor	15' x 15'	N	" "	--	grill; no floor
shelter #5	1	good	25' x 30'	N	" "	water	10 tables / grill
ballfield	1	fair	175'	N	" "	electric (o)	lighting

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
Conemaugh Township Park							
outdoor swimming pool	1	fair	??	N	grass	oe, w, s	bath house
shelter	1	fair	25' x 50'	N	" "	--	no floor; 7 tables
concession stand/ restrooms	1	good		Y	gravel	e, w	includes small meeting room, storage and restrooms
baseball field	1	good	high school	N	gravel	--	
softball field	1	good	high school	N	gravel	--	
volleyball courts	3	fair		N			
horseshoe courts	4	good					
basketball court	1	good		Y	gravel	e	new
Saltsburg River's Edge Park							
trail	1	good	1400'	N	yes	--	recycled running track
benches	--	good	--	N	yes	--	--
boat put-in	1	good	--	N	no	--	--
shelter	1	good	10' x 10'	N	yes	--	--
interpretive signs	--	good	--	--	--	--	--
canal path	1	good	1000'	Y	yes	--	historic
Saltsburg Park							
shelter	1	good	13' x 13'	Y	gravel	w, ue	2 tables
water fountain	1	good	--	Y	--	--	--
basketball	1	good	40' x 60'	Y	--	--	--
playground	1	good	--	--	--	--	--
Blairsville Community Park							
playground #1	1	good	--	N	yes	--	playground for 2-5
playground #2	1	good	--	N	yes	--	playground for 5-12
misc. play equipment	--	fair	--	N	yes	--	--
sand box	1	fair	--	N	yes	--	--
shelter	1	good	30' x 70'	N	--	--	lights; outlets
swings	2	good	3 bay	N	far	--	--
walk/running track	1	good	1183'	Y	yes	--	--
sand volleyball	1	fair	80' x 40'	N	yes	--	no net; weeds
Blairsville Little League Fields							
field #1	1	good	275'	N	yes -grass	--	--
field #2	1	good	191'	N	" "	--	lighted
batting cages	1	good	--	N	" "	--	--
field #3	1	fair	377'	N	" "	--	--

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
Blairsville Wyotech Park							
field #1	1	good	375'	N	on access road	--	--
field #2	1	good	220'	N	" "	--	--
field #3	1	poor	--	N	" "	--	appears to be unused
Burrell Township Saylor Park							
play equipment	--	poor	--	N	yes	--	old; no surfacing
shelter #1	1	fair	30' x 20'	Y	yes	--	2 tables; 2 grills
shelter #2	1	good	58' x 26'	N	few	--	6 tables; 1 grill
gazebo	2	good	10' x 10'	N	yes	--	--
ballfield #1	1	fair	290'	N	yes	--	--
ballfield #2	1	fair	270'	N	yes	--	--
tennis court	1	poor	60' x 125'	N	yes	--	--
walking trail	1	good	??	Y	yes	--	--
rest rooms	1	good	--	N	yes	--	--
Burrell Township Blacklick Park							
basketball court	1	--	--	N	yes	--	--
pavilion	1	fair	--	Y	yes	--	--
rest rooms	1	good	--	N	yes	--	--
play equipment	1	fair	--	N	yes	--	--
ballfields	2	good	--	N	yes	--	--
Buffington Township Park							
pavilion #1	1	fair	32' x 32'	N	yes	--	no floor; 10 tables
rest rooms / maint. building	1	fair	--	N	" "	w, ue	--
ballfield	1	fair	--	N	" "	--	no infield
swings	2	poor	--	N	" "	--	--
pavilion #2	1	fair	16' x 16'	N	" "	electric (u)	no floor; grill
pavilion #3	1	fair	30' x 15'	N	" "	electric (u)	no floor; 15x15' L-shaped
volleyball net	1	fair	--	N	" "	--	grass
Brush Valley Park							
pavilion	1	good	??	N	yes	--	--
trail	1	good	2,500'	N	" "	--	gravel
ballfield	1	fair	--	N	" "	--	no infield
playground	1	fair	--	N	" "	--	needs safety surfacing
volleyball	1	fair	--	N	" "	--	needs sand
restrooms/concession stand	1	good	27' x 24'	N	" "	ue, w	--

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
Cherryhill Township Park							
misc. play equipment	--	fair	--	N	yes	--	--
pavilion	1	good	40' x 20'	N	yes	--	gravel floor; 2 grills
basketball court	1	fair	40' x 60'	N	yes	--	--
West Wheatfield Township Community Playground							
play equipment	--	good	--	N	grass	--	--
basketball court	1	fair	--	N	grass	--	unusable
walking trail	1	fair	--	N	grass	--	needs paved
West Wheatfield Clyde Firehall Playground							
Playground	1						
Center Township Syntron Park							
softball field	1						
Center Township Aultman Park							
tennis court		poor	60' x 40'	N	no	--	no net, cracked surface, partial fencing
playground		fair					
pavilion	1	good	30' x 20'	N	no	--	concrete pad, no tables
basketball court	1	good	--	N	no	--	--
Center Township Risinger Park							
basketball court	1	fair	60' x 40'	N	no	water	cracked surface
baseball field	1	fair	105'	N	on-street	--	no fence on left
playground	1	fair	--	N	on-street	--	wood equipment
water fountain	1	good	--	N	--	water	--
Center Township Coral/Graceton Park							
tennis court	1	poor	44' x 44'	N		--	no fencing on 2 sides
basketball court	1	poor	44' x 44'	N		--	
baseball field	1	fair	400' cf	N		--	fence needs repairs
pavilion	1	fair	--	N	minimal	--	no conc. floor, no tables
walking trail	1						
water fountain	1	fair	--	N		--	vandalized
Center Township Lucerne Park							
playground	1	fair	--	N	minimal	--	--
basketball court	1	fair	60' x 40'	N	no	--	surface needs repairs
White Township Recreation Complex							
basketball courts	2	good	75' x 44'	Y	--	--	--
restroom/concession stand #1	1	good	24 x 55'	Y		w, ue, t	--
parking lot #1	1	good	--	Y	110 spaces	--	6 ADA

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
S&T Bank Baseball Field	1	good	335'	Y	--	w, ue	fencing, dugouts, bleachers
Kiwanis Baseball Field	1	good	300'	Y	--	w, ue	fencing, dugouts, bleachers
Keystone Rehab. Baseball Field	1	good	340'	Y	--	w, ue	fencing, dugouts, bleachers, stadium seating
Charlie Hogan Baseball Field	1	good	284'	Y	--	w, ue	fencing, dugouts, bleachers
tennis courts	5	good		Y	--	--	--
soccer fields	2	good	280' x 65'	N	--	--	--
playground	1	good		--	--	--	--
restroom/concession stand #2	1	--	40' x 20'	Y	--	w, ue	--
parking lot #2	1	--		--	80 spaces	--	--
pavilion	1	--	25' x 40'	--	24 spaces	w, ue	charcoal grill
restrooms	1	--	20' x 20'	--	--	w, ue	--
trail	1	--	aprox. 1 mile	--	--	--	--
White Township - 4th Ward Playground							
basketball court	1	fair	20' x 35'	N	4 spaces	--	--
small playground	1	poor	--	--	--	--	unsafe
picnic tables	3	good	--	--	--	--	--
benches	6	good	--	--	--	--	--
White Township Getty Heights Park							
picnic pavilion	1	good	30' x 40'	Y	18	w, e	inadequate parking
softball field	1	fair	205'	N	shared		
sand volleyball courts	2	fair	60' x 70'		shared		
disc golf course	1	good		N	shared		
playground	1	fair		N	shared		doesn't meet safety standards
parking lot	1	good		Y	shared		inadequate
rest rooms	2	good	20' x 20'	Y	shared		
White Township Kennedy-King Park							
softball field	1	fair	175'	N	10		
basketball court	1	fair	50' x 85'	N	shared	e	lights
tennis courts	4	fair		N	shared	e	large cracks, peeling surface
playground	1	fair		N	shared		does not meet current safety standards
shelter	1	good	20' x 30'	N	shared		graffitti

FACILITY	NO.	COND.	SIZE	ADA	PARKING	UTILITIES	COMMENTS
Indiana Borough Paul McGregor Park							
multi-purpose field	1	good	350' x 160'	N	on-street		
playground	1	poor		N			does not meet current safety standards
restroom	1	good		N		w, e	
Glen Campbell Community Park							
pavilion	1	good	24' x 16'	N	grass	--	cement floor, grills, tables
volley ball court	1	poor	--	N	grass	--	no net, pole missing
playground	1	fair	--	N	grass	--	needs safety surfacing
Glen Campbell Firemen's Park							
shelter	1	fair	--	N	grass	e	--
pavilion	1	poor	47' x 17'	N	grass	e	blacktop floor, no tables
Montgomery Township Park							
baseball field	1	good	200'	N	grass	--	--
shelter	1	good	24' x 16'	N	grass	--	--
parking lot	1	good	--	N	shell	--	--
playground	1	fair	--	N	wood chips	--	--
Pine Township Park							
basketball court	1						
volleyball court	1						
playground	1						
picnic area	1						
Old Smicksburg Park							
walking trail	1						
historic site	1						

Local Parks with Ballfields Only

- Plumville Community Ballfield
- Montgomery Township Gypsy Ballfield
- Green Township Ballfield
- Green Township Dixon Ballfield
- Ernest Ballfield
- Young Township McIntyre Ballfield
- Rossiter Ballfield

Other Recreation Facilities

Two Lick Reservoir (privately owned)

- boat launch/lake use - for a fee

Indiana Ice and Expo Center (privately owned)

- ice rink - 2
- lockers/showers - 2
- common area - 1
- pro-shop - 1
- snack bar/kitchen - 1
- arcade - 1

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

- variety of recreational opportunities open to public on a limited basis (ballfield, trails, pavilion)

Indiana County YMCA

- fitness center - 1
- gymnasium - 1
- swimming pool - 1
- aerobics room - 1
- meeting/class rooms -
- picnic pavilion - 1
- ballfields - 3
- walking track - 1

Mack Park

(operated by the Mack Foundation)

- swimming pool
- pavilion
- large playground

Whites Woods (natural area)

- hiking trails

Indiana County Fair Association Fairgrounds

- ballfields
- track

Community Centers

- Blairsville Borough Community Center
- Cherryhill Township Community Center
- Montgomery Township Community Center
- Marion Center Community Center

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PARKS

The map on page 71 suggests a good distribution of local parks throughout the County. In an effort to analyze this distribution more thoroughly and compare the parks with the population distribution, the County is broken into four Tiers as follows.

Northern Tier – West Mahoning, North Mahoning, East Mahoning, South Mahoning, Grant, Canoe, Banks and Montgomery Townships; Smicksburg, Plumville, Marion Center, Cherry Tree, and Glen Campbell Boroughs.

Urban Tier – White Township and Indiana Borough.
Central Tier – Washington, Rayne, Green, Pine, Cherryhill, Armstrong, Center, Brush Valley, and Buffington Townships; Shelocta, Homer City, Creekside, Ernst, and Clymer Boroughs.

Southern Tier – Young, Conemaugh, Blacklick, Burrell, West Wheatfield, and East Wheatfield Townships; Saltsburg, Blairsville, Armagh Boroughs.

The Northern Tier has 13% of the County population and 16% of the County's local parks. The percentage of parks is slightly higher than the Tier's percentage of population. Because the population is sparsely spread across the region, it is appropriate to have a higher percentage of parks. A community park in the Borough of Punxsutawney, Jefferson County, is also close to

many residents in the Northern Tier. The Central Tier has 32% of the County's population and 42% of the local parks. This is higher than might be expected but many of the parks are very small. The Urban Tier has 32% of the County's population and 20% of the local parks. The parks in the Urban Tier tend to be the larger local parks in the County. There are also several other recreational facilities such as the YMCA, Indiana Ice and Expo Center, and Indiana University facilities that also provide recreational opportunities in this Tier. The Southern Tier has 22% of the County's population and 22% of the local parks.

Many of the local parks throughout Indiana County are in need of upgrades and repairs. In nineteen of the forty-seven parks, more than half of the facilities are ranked in fair or poor condition. These classifications indicate that there are safety concerns at these parks. Twenty-two of the playgrounds are ranked as either fair or poor. This ranking would mean that they do not meet current playground safety standards. Only one of the local parks meets the standards for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Based on this analysis, a significant effort needs to be undertaken to bring the parks into compliance with current safety and ADA standards.

There are three outdoor swimming pools in the County. The Conemaugh Township Swimming Pool is located in the southwest corner of the County. It was completely rehabilitated in 2004/2005 and is in very good condition. The Mack Park Swimming Pool is located in the center of the County in the Borough of Indiana. It is in good condition and is well-maintained. The County's third swimming pool is located in Homer City's Memorial Park.

The Borough of Punxsutawney, Jefferson County swimming pool is located about three miles north of the Indiana County border and provides swimming for some Indiana County residents. The pool is in fair condition.

Currently there are several communities that are involved with each other in providing recreational facilities and service on a multi-municipal basis. White Township and Indiana Borough have created the Indiana Area Recreation Commission that provides maintenance of several local parks as well as recreational programming for its residents. Homer Center Recreation and Parks provide services for the entire Homer-Center School District.

The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) promotes multi-municipal cooperation as it offers a higher priority in its grant programs for such operations. DCNR encourages communities to begin with multi-municipal planning efforts to determine specific parks and recreation needs. This is often accomplished through Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Plans for several municipalities in the same area or master site plans for individual parks. Once the planning is complete, a higher grant priority is given to the participating communities to improve and expand their facilities according to the recommendations of the plan. The Indiana County Office of Planning and Development could work with local communities to encourage planning and development of park projects on a multi-municipal level. This will provide a better opportunity for these municipalities to receive grant funding from the State.

In the 2006-2007 DCNR Grants Program, communities of fewer than 5,000 residents can receive up to \$20,000 in grant funds with no local match required. For projects of \$21,000 to \$60,000, these communities would be required to pay 20% as a local match. According to the 2000 Census Data, all municipalities in Indiana County, except Indiana Borough and White Township, have fewer than 5,000 residents. Each municipality should take full advantage of this funding source to begin local park improvements.

For larger development projects, DCNR requires a local match of 50% of the project cost. The local match can include both cash and non-cash contributions.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Indiana County Parks and Trails Department focuses strictly on providing recreational facilities. All recreational programming offered within the County parks is provided by cooperating organizations.

The primary provider of recreational programming within the County Parks is “Friends of the Parks”. Friends of the Parks is a volunteer, non-profit organization that provides environmental education programs for Indiana County Parks and Trails and Yellow Creek State Park. They have been in operation since 1984.

In 2004, twenty six programs were offered in four County Parks - Blacklick Valley Natural Area, Ghost Town Trail, Blue Spruce, and Pine Ridge Parks. In previous years, programs have been offered at Hemlock Lake and Memorial Park as well. Additionally, fourteen programs are offered at Yellow Creek State Park.

Programs offered in 2004 are typical to the slate of programs offered in recent years. Attendance at Friends for the Parks programs has averaged about 1500 in recent years. This is up dramatically from the average of 500 just ten years ago.

The following is the 2004 program schedule.

- Indiana County Parks and Trails Programs
- Full Moon Ski - Blacklick Valley Natural Area
- Poems: Nature and Love - Blue Spruce Lodge
- The Beauty of the American Southwest - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Birding Our National Wildlife Refuges - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Maple Sugaring - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Fly-Tying for Trout Fishing - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Wildlife of the Galapagos - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Wildlife Rehabilitation - Blue Spruce Lakeside Center
- Customs and Foods of Modern-Day Native Americans - Blue Spruce Lodge



- Morel Hunting in Western PA - Pine Lodge
- Watershed Restoration - Blue Spruce Lodge
- History of Indiana County - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Mother's Day Wildflower Walk and Tea - Blue Spruce Lodge
- How Shocking! - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Geocaching - Blue Spruce Lakeside Center
- Herbs: Their Uses from Antiquity to Today - Blue Spruce Lakeside Center
- Autumn Stars - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Wonderful Walking Sticks - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Pennsylvania's Black Bears - PA Game Commission - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Fall "Weed" Walk - Ghost Town Trail, Rexis Access Area
- Georgian Bay: The Sixth Great Lake? - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Animal Communication with Sound - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Hiking in Peru - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Elk of Pennsylvania - Blue Spruce Lodge
- Undersea Journey - Blue Spruce Lodge
- The Wonder of Mt. Rainier's Wonderland Trail - Blue Spruce Lodge

Yellow Creek State Park Programs

- Pennsylvania's Jewels: Facing Today's Challenges - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Hide Tanning at Home - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Spinner Baits and Plastics for Bass and Pike - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Wild Turkeys Are Here to Stay - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Butterfly Gardening - Stake Church at Yellow Creek State Park
- Venomous Snakes of PA - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- A College Student's European Sojourn - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Creek Critters - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- I Spy a Pennsylvania Tree - Yellow Creek Nature Center

- Be a Purple Martin "Landlord" - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Wetlands at Work - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Birds of Prey - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Night Hike - Yellow Creek Nature Center
- Owl Prowl - Yellow Creek Nature Center

Other Recreational Programming

Numerous other agencies and local municipalities provide a variety of recreational programs for residents of Indiana County. The public recreation providers chart on the following page identifies many of those agencies, the types of programming they offer, and their primary service areas. These organizations play a vital role in providing local recreation throughout the County.

Indiana Ice and Expo Center

The Indiana Ice and Expo Center is located adjacent to the White Township Recreation Complex. It was built by a group of private investors in 1995 to provide ice activities to Indiana and the surrounding area. The facility was operated as a private business for a number of years. The Center consisted of two sheets of ice, a lobby area, locker rooms, pro-shop, meeting rooms and office space.

In 2006, White Township purchased the Center to operate it as a municipal facility. The Township believes it can make better use of the facility by diversifying its recreational opportunities. While they intend to continue providing ice skating, they will also offer much more. The Township intends to convert one sheet of Ice into a recreation center with a multi-purpose floor and gymnasium. The facility will become more of a community center providing indoor tennis, soccer, basketball, volleyball and other sports. Additionally, it will be used for large community events and trade shows, and will be available for rent to both public and private groups, organizations and individuals. Its location next to the Township's outdoor sports complex will allow for indoor/outdoor events as well.

White Township hopes to expand its community recreational programming by either coordinating with the Indiana Area Recreation Commission or by providing programming on its own. As a municipal facility, the Center adds a new dimension to public recreational opportunities.

Public Recreation Providers in Indiana County

AGENCY OR MUNICIPALITY	PROGRAMS PROVIDED	LOCATION	AREAS SERVED
Indiana County YMCA	Swimming lessons, leagues and recreational. Youth sports and camps. Exercise, fitness and aerobics. Summer day camps. Adult basketball, softball and volleyball leagues. Preschool programs. Special events.	Indiana	Primarily Indiana County
Indiana University of PA	All types of recreational activities for IUP students. Some availability to community residents.	Indiana	IUP students and Indiana area.
Indiana Ice and Expo Center	Ice Skating for all ages. Figure skating, hockey, and free style. Learn to skate, youth programs, Jr. and Varsity High school programs, adult recreational, open skates, amateur league. Roller hockey, birthday parties, and rentals.	Indiana	Regional
Indiana Area Recreation	Youth, teen and adult sports, nature, swimming and art. Soccer, basketball, t-ball, volleyball, karate, flag football, cheerleading, baton, dance, etc. Sports camps, instruction, and leagues. Summer day camps. Much more.	Indiana	Indiana area
White Township Parks and Recreation	Summer recreational program.	White Township	White Township and surrounding communities.
Homer Center Recreation and Parks	Summer and after school recreation	Homer City	Homer-Center School District
Blairsville Recreation Department	Summer and after school recreation	Blairsville	Blairsville Borough
Conservation and Environmental Groups	Numerous Conservation and environmental organizations provide development, preservation and education activities.	Throughout the County	Indiana County
Sportsman and Outdoor Recreation Organizations	Dozens of sportsman, hunting, fishing, shooting, biking, and birding clubs can be found in Indiana County.	Throughout the County	Indiana County
Youth Sports Organizations	Baseball, soccer, football, softball, hockey, and others.	Throughout the County	Some are for local communities or school districts. Others are countywide.
Community Centers	Local community and recreational activities.	Blacklick Township, Blairsville Borough, Cherryhill Township, Montgomery Township and Marion Center Borough.	Local communities.
School Districts	Most school districts play a significant role in providing local recreation. These include after school and summer programs.	Throughout the County	Local communities.

Analysis of Recreational Programming

The public input received as part of this study indicated that local recreation efforts are not meeting the needs of the residents. In particular, residents of the northern sections of the county felt as though they are underserved. Our analysis of where recreational programming is available supports this.

The rural nature of the County and its widely dispersed population make it very difficult to address local recreation needs. It also needs to be recognized that many parts of the county are of lower income levels. The County as a whole is one of the poorest in the Commonwealth. Therefore individual payment for programs may be problematic.

The Indiana County Office of Planning and Development has provided strong support to assist communities in development of local parks, but funding of recreational programs is not readily available. Perhaps the most viable agencies to meet community recreational needs would be the local school districts. They tend to have a variety of recreational facilities that could be made available to community residents for after school and evening programs. These could include indoor and outdoor sports, arts and crafts, after school recreational activities, special events, and others.

Additionally, it would be appropriate for the YMCA to consider efforts to either bring programming to individual communities or provide transportation for residents to the on-site YMCA programs.

OPEN SPACE, GREENWAYS, AND TRAILS

Open space, greenways, and trails are an important part of a comprehensive county parks, recreation, and open space system.

There are local, state, and county agencies and organizations involved in open space conservation efforts. These groups and their efforts should be inventoried and a coordinated system developed. For inventory information on natural resources in the County, refer to the County's Comprehensive Plan. This information will provide the basis for future recommendations regarding designation and conservation of greenways and open space. The Comprehensive Plan also indicates areas that may face development pressure in the future and should be the focus of conservation efforts.

Similarly, there is a need for a comprehensive inventory of trail opportunities and organizational efforts throughout the County.

WHAT IS A GREENWAY?

1. A linear open space established either along a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route.
2. Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage.
3. An open space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas.
4. Locally, certain strip or linear parks designated as a parkway or greenbelt.

PENNSYLVANIA GREENWAYS

An action Plan for Creating Connections

Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Commission developed an Action Plan for greenways in Pennsylvania. The primary goal identified by that Plan is that by the year 2020, Pennsylvania should have a system of greenways connecting all parts of the state.

Pennsylvania’s greenways network is comprised of “hubs and spokes.” The “hubs” are large areas of publicly owned space, cultural, historic, and recreation sites, and urban and suburban areas. The “spokes” are the greenways. They connect natural areas to the places people reside.

PENNSYLVANIA’S GREENWAY VISION

Pennsylvania and its many partners will develop an outstanding network of greenways across the Commonwealth, creating an asset highly valued by Pennsylvanians and enhancing the quality of life for all. This network of greenways will connect Pennsylvania’s open space, natural landscape features, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational sites, and urban and rural communities. Greenways will become one of the Commonwealth’s most powerful tools to achieve sustainable growth and livable communities.

County “Greenway Plans”

Each county is encouraged to apply greenways as a land use strategy, and to map existing and proposed greenway hubs and spokes in a “greenway plan.” These plans can include identification of open space and can link the mapping of greenway hubs and spokes with conservation, community planning and revitalization, and other comprehensive planning efforts. This information can be integrated and shared statewide through a Greenways Geographic Information System.

Recommendation

Greenway Plans - Greenprints for Growth: Promote the development of “greenway plans” by county and local governments as an integral part of their comprehensive planning and implementation efforts, encouraging them to link greenway concerns with programs that address sound land use, community revitalization, recreational needs and open space protection.

- 2007: All 67 counties complete and adopt Greenway Plans.

Greenway Plan Components should include:

- Inventory of existing and planned greenway spokes (connecting corridors such as natural corridors along rivers, hiking and biking trails, water trails, etc.).
- Identification of land uses that may be considered greenway “hubs” such as natural areas (parks, forests, game lands, wildlife refuges, bodies of water, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, scenic view sheds, and prime agricultural lands), cultural, historical and recreational sites, and urban and suburban areas (communities, neighborhoods, schools, senior centers and housing, etc.).
- Identification and prioritization of potential greenways that could provide recreation, protect natural resources and cultural resources, and make

connections - people to facilities, people to natural areas, and wildlife to natural areas.

- Identification of the top five natural resource areas that need to be protected through a greenway, such as streams and their buffers, 100-year floodplains and habitats of threatened or endangered species.
- Identification of the top five historical and cultural resources that need an enhanced connection or need to be protected through a greenway.
- Inventory of scenic resources or view sheds for connection to or protection through a greenway.
- Identification of opportunities for incorporating greenways into proposed development projects and redevelopment of brownfield sites.

This greenways identification and planning initiative should be fully coordinated and integrated with the land use planning efforts of the Governor's Center for Local Government Services and should achieve the following objectives:

- Extensive public involvement during the development of the "greenway plans."
- Identification and mapping of greenway hubs and spokes should be accomplished in a format compatible with the Greenways GIS initiative, should be incorporated into the statewide GIS database and should be easily accessible to all greenways partners.
- Coordinate with local and regional planning initiatives including comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and recreation/open space plans.
- Coordination with the planning initiatives of surrounding counties and regional planning organizations.

- Greenway plans should be updated every ten years and should supplement the statewide GIS repository.

The proposed Indiana County Greenway and Trails Plan is the basis of the county network.

OPEN SPACE

The Indiana County Comprehensive Plan, along with the County Greenways and Trail Plan, will address issues Open Space and Greenway issues specific to Indiana County. A partial inventory of open space, including parks, trails, and state game lands, is identified earlier in this chapter. Additional inventory and analysis is provided in the Indiana County Comprehensive Plan.

The following describes a number of strategies that should be considered as a means to protect additional open space throughout the County.

Open Space and Natural Areas Acquisition

This practice is based on the acquisition of land by a municipality or any governmental agency for the purpose of preservation of open space and natural areas. The purchase can be of fee simple title or conservation easements, and is usually done by a governmental or public agency or a non-profit land trust organization. Land acquisition can be made at every level of government.

Benefits:

Acquisition of fee simple title or a conservation easement on land provides a more permanent long-term protection of open space and natural areas than through other methods such as zoning or subdivision requirements. Acquisition provides a means to enable non-profit groups, in partnership with communities, to protect open space and natural areas at minimal or no cost and little administrative burden to local governments.

Implementation:

Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has sources of funding to help communities and non-profit groups implement acquisition of open space and natural area projects.

Forest Land Conservation Easements

Conservation easements on working forests are a market-driven tool used to preserve open space, like those used to protect working farmland. Easements can be used to protect forests for present and future economic benefit, with subsequent attendant benefits such as wildlife habitat, watershed protection, outdoor recreation, and soil conservation.

Benefits:

As open space diminishes while development advances, economically valuable forest land is lost. Timber is one of the top five sectors in Pennsylvania’s economy, and its continued availability is dependent upon the existence and preservation of open space and forests. The benefits are economic, as well as environmental. Site benefits of easements include lower property taxes for landowners.

Implementation:

Some non-profit organizations, such as conservancies and land trusts, provide financial support for purchasing easements from landowners; they also accept tax deductible donations of easements from landowners. The U.S. Forest Service’s Forest Legacy Initiative provides funding to state governments to help purchase easements on private forestland.

Agricultural Protection Zoning

Agricultural protection zoning ordinances designate areas where farming is the primary land use and discourage other land uses in those areas.

Benefits:

Agricultural protection zoning stabilizes the agricultural land base by keeping large tracts of land relatively free of non-farm development. This can reduce the likelihood

of conflicts between farmers and their non-farming neighbors. Maintaining a critical mass of agricultural land can ensure that there will be enough farmland to support local agricultural services.

Implementation:

Agricultural protection zoning can be economically viable by using such tools as Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights.

Transfer/Purchase of Development Rights

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR’s) is a zoning tool that allows conservation and development to co-exist within a municipality. Growth is directed to preferred locations through the sale and purchase of development rights. Development rights are established for a given piece of land, and can be separated from the title of that property. The sale of TDR’s leaves the rural landowner in possession of title to the land and the right to use the property as a farm, open space, or for some related purpose. However, it removes the owner’s right to develop the property for other purposes. The Transfer of Development Rights allows the purchaser of the development rights to then develop another parcel more intensively than would otherwise be permitted. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR’s) operates in a similar manner. However, with PDR’s, an entity (either alone or jointly) buys the right to develop land from the landowner. The landowner retains the use of the land, and receives tax benefits. The municipality can pass a bond issue to buy the rights and “bank” them. A developer may purchase the development rights from the municipality when he wishes to develop an area with high density. The municipal bond financing, which was entered into to purchase the rights, is paid off over the years by the purchase of development rights as development occurs.

Benefits:

The value of each development right is controlled by the open market, not the municipality. TDR’s

are an equitable option for preserving open space and agricultural lands by compensating the owner of preserved land, while guiding growth of development through the allowance of increased density where existing infrastructure can support it. PDR's give immediate return to the landowner. It compensates the landowners for reduction in development potential, and facilitates the goals of the development district concept. PDR's also streamline the time line for development since private sales and negotiations for development rights are not necessary to go forward with high density development. It allows the municipality to guide growth since it owns all the development rights. In Pennsylvania, TDR programs can only be used to transfer development rights within a single municipality or among municipalities with a joint ordinance. It is up to each municipality implementing TDR to set up a mechanism to accomplish this transfer.

Agricultural Security Areas

A landowner or group of landowners whose parcels together comprise at least 250 acres may apply to their local government

Benefits:

Agricultural Security Area Designation encourages the preservation of agricultural land. Security Areas give a landowner protection from local ordinances that restrict farm practices, unless those ordinances have a direct relationship to public health or safety. These areas also protect an area from nuisance ordinances. Additionally, the designation limits land condemnation procedures - eminent domain by the Commonwealth and local agencies - unless approval is gained from the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board. The designation also qualifies the land (if it is an area of 500 acres or more) for purchase of conservation easements under the Pennsylvania statewide program. An attractive feature of the ASA designation is that it is not a permanent designation, and this may be suitable for some communities and landowners.

Implementation:

The process to designate an ASA must be initiated by a landowner or group of landowners.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

Conservation easements permanently protect farms from development. Landowners voluntarily sell conservation easements to a government entity or private conservation organization or land trust. The agency or organization usually pays them the difference between the value of the land for agricultural use, and the value of the land for its "highest and best use" which is generally residential or commercial development.

Benefits:

Conservation easements permanently preserve land for agricultural use. Purchase of easements by municipalities on their own can be done more selectively and expeditiously as they do not have to conform to the county or state guidelines.

Implementation:

County Agricultural Land Preservation Boards have primary responsibility for developing application procedures. They also establish priority for easement purchases based on a numerical ranking system. The ranking system is modeled upon state regulations that require consideration of soil quality, conservation practices, development pressures in the County, and the location of other permanently preserved farmland and open space.

Agricultural Tax Incentives

Differential assessment laws direct local governments to assess agricultural land at its value for agriculture, instead of at its full market value, which is generally higher. Differential assessment laws are enacted in the state and implemented at the local level.

Benefits:

These programs afford protection to farmers to continue operating an agricultural operation in the face of

development, thus helping to ensure the economic viability of agriculture. These tax laws align agricultural property taxes with what it actually costs local governments to provide services to the land.

Implementation:

Landowners must apply to the County Assessment Office.

Conservation Techniques

(summarized from Land Use in Pennsylvania: Practices and Tools, An Inventory)

Open Space Zoning/Conservation Design

The purpose of this technique is to preserve a larger amount of land for conservation uses, while still allowing full-density development. In contrast to cluster zoning, where the emphasis is more often placed on providing active recreation areas, open space zoning is more suited for protecting farmland, woodland habitat, historic sites, and scenic views. Subdivisions are required to dedicate a significant portion of their unconstrained land to permanent open space uses. The open space is typically owned and managed (according to an approved management plan) by a homeowners association. Other possible owners include land trusts, the local municipality, or individuals with large “conservancy lots”, which are a form of non-common open space.

Benefits:

This technique preserves large open spaces while allowing full-density development. When done, the open space in each new subdivision will ultimately join together to form interconnected systems of conservation lands.

Implementation:

This technique can be implemented through a municipality’s zoning ordinance. The number of dwellings permitted is based on the net acreage of buildable land and the underlying density in the zoning

district. Easements are then placed on the open space to ensure that it will not be further subdivided or developed.

Overlay Zoning Districts

An overlay zoning district applies regulations to, and are in addition to, and supersede the requirements of the underlying zoning district(s). Such a district may recognize unique features, either natural or man-made, requiring special attention, or may facilitate development of a special character.

Benefits:

Overlay zoning allows regulations to be tailored to specific conditions. Administration is the same as any zoning district.

Implementation:

In general, the provisions of a zoning district must apply uniformly to each class of uses or structures within each district. However, Section 605 of the Municipal Planning Code authorizes additional classifications, potentially through the use of overlay zoning, for:

- making transitional provisions at, and near, the boundaries of districts
- regulating non-conforming uses and structures
- regulating, restricting, or prohibiting uses and structures at, along, or near:
 - major thoroughfares, their intersections and interchanges, transportation arteries, and rail or transit terminals
 - natural or artificial bodies of water, boat docks and related facilities
 - places of relatively steep slope or grade, or areas of hazardous geological or topographic features
 - public buildings and public grounds
 - aircraft, helicopter, rocket, and spacecraft facilities
 - places having unique historical, architectural, or patriotic interest or value
 - floodplain areas, agricultural areas, sanitary

landfills, and other places having a special character or use affecting and affected by their surroundings

- encouraging innovations and the promotion of flexibility, economy and ingenuity in development, including subdivisions and land developments; and for the purpose of authorizing increases in the permissible density of population or intensity of a particular use based upon expressed standards and criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance
- regulating transferable development rights on a voluntary basis

Riparian Buffers

Riparian buffers are areas of vegetation along waterways that protect water quality and stabilize stream channels. Vegetated areas along streams are of significant ecological importance because they:

- slow flood waters and reduce the volume of water through root absorption
- improve water quality by filtering runoff and promoting sediment deposition
- allow water storage in plant roots and provide pathways to ground water layers
- provide canopy cover, which shades and cools streams, thus improving habitat conditions for in-stream organisms, while providing relief from the extreme heat for terrestrial animals
- provide habitat for a variety of birds and small mammals, while acting as corridors to similar habitat, providing food, shelter, and nesting sites
- provide great opportunities for recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, bird watching, picnicking, and camping
- Stream bank habitat restoration can include three techniques: structural (i.e. installing stone riprap to reduce erosion); vegetative (i.e. planting vegetation to absorb water, filter pollutants, and reduce erosion); and bioengineering, which combines both structural and vegetative approaches (i.e. bundles of

willow cuttings tied together and inserted in stream bank trenches).

Stream bed and stream bank improvements can improve the ecological health of the riparian zone, but they cannot compensate for land abuses affecting the stream. Land use management techniques may include the installation of fencing to keep livestock out of the creeks or the installation of storm water management structures.

Chapter 2



Chapter 2 Public Participation

STUDY COMMITTEE

From the beginning of the planning process, through to the final recommendations, the Study Committee played an important role in the development of this Plan. Detailed minutes from each of the meetings can be found in the Appendix.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Valuable input from the general public was gathered through regional public meetings held throughout the County. The Consultant gave an overview of the Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space planning process and held a brainstorming session to provide residents with an opportunity to voice their opinions and identify key issues.

KEY PERSON INTERVIEWS

Twenty-eight key person interviews were conducted, with individuals identified by the Study Committee as people who could provide valuable input regarding parks and recreation issues.

RECREATION SURVEY

In July, 2003, 3,000 recreation surveys were mailed to a random selection of Indiana County households. Three hundred and sixty-one (361) completed surveys were received and tabulated by the consultant for a response rate of twelve percent (12%).

OTHER PUBLIC INPUT

As part of this study, the consultants also reviewed public input gathered as part of the Indiana County Comprehensive Plan and the “Indiana County Speaks Up!” survey, conducted in the summer of 2002, by the Children’s Advisory Commission.

What does the Study Committee do?

- Act as a sounding board for ideas as the Plan is developed.
- Assist in the development of the recreation questionnaire.
- Provide feedback as existing recreational facilities and programs are inventoried.
- Assist with developing recommendations for the future.
- Review and comment on the draft report.

Public input was a key component to the development of the County’s Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan.

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Public Meetings

- Create an advisory council to work with local municipalities
- Tie in recreation with tourism / economic development
 - Use a portion of the funds generated by hotel tax for recreation
 - Driving tour – scenic view, historic sites
- Increase public awareness of the County Parks System
 - Better wayfinding signs
 - Web site
 - Maps locating parks
 - Tie in employer/employee benefits of recreational opportunities
- Promote open space conservation
- Increase budget for park maintenance
- Regionalize recreational services for funding and technical assistance
 - County parks staff provide technical assistance to local recreation association and governments
- County park opportunities:
 - Lime Kiln
 - Identify “special places” throughout the county – areas for protection, preservation
 - 3,000 acres north of Conemaugh lake
 - Provide access to the Army Corps property for fishing, hiking, and boating
 - Place for environmental education (like McKeever)
- Trails:
 - Provide interpretive signs along trails
 - Provide more benches along trails
 - Need horse trails
 - Integrate trails with schools
 - Develop trail along Conemaugh river
- Offer more special events
 - Train staff in holding special events
 - Open air concerts
 - Arts festival

- Facilities:
 - Provide camping
 - Outdoor amphitheater

Recreation Survey

- Desired recreational facilities:
 - Sledding area
 - Rental cabins
 - Skateboarding/rollerblading areas
 - Downhill skiing and snowboarding areas
 - Bike, hiking, walking, and jogging trails
 - Rifle/handgun ranges
- Increase public awareness of recreation areas and opportunities
- Maintain existing park and recreation areas
- Acquire additional land and water areas for recreation
- Provide programs and special events at county parks
- Expand and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for tourism

Key Person Interviews

- Increase awareness
- Northern part of the county has no recreational opportunities
- Not enough bike trails and connections to existing parks
- Need a place to rent bikes (esp. on Hoodlebug trail)
- Need more biking/hiking trails
- Integrate trail system with county parks
- County should provide more recreational programming
- County should cooperative with municipalities to share facilities, avoid duplication of services, and increase communication

STUDY COMMITTEE BRAINSTORMING

	<u>issue</u>	<u>votes</u>
1	FUTURE FUNDING OF COUNTY PARKS FOR MAINTENANCE, ALSO FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT	27
2	CONTINENTAL REMEDIATION OF STREAMS: RIVERS FOR FISHING, BOATING, WATER ACTIVITIES - SUPPORT WATERSHED GROUPS	15
3	CREATE A PARKS ENDOWMENT OR FOUNDATIONS, SEPARATE FROM GOVERNMENT	13
4	FIND A WAY TO UTILIZE IUP STUDENTS TO VOLUNTEER FOR LOCAL/COUNTY PROGRAMS	11
5	NEED AN ALTERNATIVE REC PROGRAM/OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH SKATING, MOUNTAIN BIKING, BMX, ETC.	10
6	ASSIST LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES TO EVALUATE LOCAL LAND USE TO CONSIDER WHAT BEST SUITS LOCAL PARKS	9
7	UTILIZATION OF PRIVATE OPEN SPACE FOR REC PURPOSES. LOTS OF PRIVATE OPEN SPACE, THERE IS LITTLE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	9
8	CREATE A MEANS OF COOPERATION/COMMUNICATION AMONG ALL GROUPS INVOLVED IN PARKS AND RECREATION	8
9	DEVELOP POTENTIAL COUNTY-WIDE TRAILS IDENTIFIED IN REGIONAL TRAIL PLAN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NPS	8
10	REGIONAL APPROACH TO ATTRACTING PEOPLE TO AND DEVELOPING LOCAL GEOGRAPHY - TOURISM, HOMES, KEEPING OUR YOUTH.	7
11	IDENTIFY, PRESERVE, AND DEVELOP ALL ABANDONED RAIL AND TROLLEY LINE CORRIDORS IN THE COUNTY	7
12	DEVELOP TRAILS AND PARKS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTY	5
13	CREATE WILDLIFE PROTECTED AREAS AND CORRIDORS TRAVELING EAST-WEST AND NORTH-SOUTH	5
14	DEVELOP A SKATE PARK	5
15	POST SECONDARY SCHOOL TO BE LOCATED IN SOUTHERN PART OF COUNTY WILL NEED REC	5
16	SAFE SIDEWALKS IN TOWN	5
17	MAINTAINING DEVELOPMENT	5
18	WEST PENN TRAIL	5
19	EXPAND POSSIBLE METHODS TO PRESERVE LANDS IN NEW/CREATIVE WAYS - CONSERVATION EASEMENTS, ETC.	5

STUDY COMMITTEE BRAINSTORMING, CONT.

	<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>votes</u>
20	SWIMMING AND WATER PARKS	4
21	CREATE A PUBLIC LAND GREEN BUFFER AROUND THE ENTIRE GHOST TOWN SYSTEM	4
22	LOOK AT THE ZONING ORDINANCE THAT RESTRICTS BUFFER ZONE AROUND COUNTY PARKS - IS IT STILL EFFECTIVE TO ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSE	4
23	UTILIZE A SPECIFIC PERCENT OF THE HOTEL TAX TO PUBLICIZE DEMANDS OF THIS PLAN	4
24	CREATE A DEER PERMIT HUNTING PROGRAM IN EXISTING PARKS	4
25	LACK OF COMMUNITY CENTERS AND INDOOR REC FACILITIES	3
26	ACCESSIBILITY TO PARKS BY FOOT, BIKE, ETC.	2
27	INCREASED AWARENESS BY MAJOR EMPLOYERS TO ACCOMMODATE EMPLOYEE'S REC NEEDS - BIKE RACK, SHOWERS, LOCKERS, ETC.	2
28	REGIONAL PICTURE - OTHER COUNTIES, STATE GROUPS, CROSSING COUNTY LINES, ETC.	1
29	INCREASE NUMBER OF SPORTS FIELDS AVAILABLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES.	1
30	MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP PUBLIC ACCESS TO STREAMS	0
31	NATIONAL HIKING TRAIL AT CONEMAUGH (NOT RAIL TRAIL)	0
32	IDENTIFY PRIVATE TRACTS OF OPEN SPACE	0
33	ACCESSIBILITY/PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO PARKS	0
34	TRANSPORTATION	0
35	IDENTIFY AND INVENTORY ON GIS FACILITIES	0
36	CREATE/DEVELOP COMMUNITY ARTS, THEATER, MUSIC, ETC.	0
37	CREATE AND PUBLICIZE ROAD BIKE ROUTES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY	0
38	INCREASE THE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES AT COUNTY PARKS	0
39	UNMANAGED RECREATION - MAKE AVAILABLE	0
40	STRENGTHEN SUPPORT OF CONEMAUGH DAM	0
41	UPDATING AND BEAUTIFYING CURRENT PARKS AND REC CENTERS.	0

STUDY COMMITTEE BRAINSTORMING, CONT.

	<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>votes</u>
42	CONSIDER OTHER REC ACTIVITIES BEFORE ELIMINATING/ZONING SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS OUT	0
43	INFO PRODUCED FROM THIS PLAN NEEDS TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH SPC.	0
44	CONSIDER USER FEES	0
45	STAFFING	0
46	COORDINATE COUNTY-WIDE ROAD WIDENING FOR BIKE LANES, STATE/LOCAL	0
47	EXPAND YELLOW CREEK SP BY PURCHASING LAND ALONG 422 FOR ROAD FRONTAGE	0
48	ENFORCEMENT OF BEST PRACTICES STANDARDS	0



**PUBLIC MEETING #1 BRAINSTORMING
- JUNE 11, 2003**

	<u>issue</u>	<u>votes</u>
1	NEED FOR AN ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR COUNTY PARKS - CAN WORK WITH MUNICIPALITIES	13
2	NEED FOR PARK LAND FOR ATV'S - GOING WHERE THEY SHOULDN'T BE, CAUSING EROSION AND OTHER DAMAGE	12
3	CONSIDER PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE LANDOWNERS - HIKING TRAILS?, SHELTERS?, STREAM ACCESS?	12
4	TOURISM IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - MUST HAVE CHAMBER/ECON. DEVELOPMENT PEOPLE REALIZE - COUNTY HOTEL TAX TO GO TO TRAILS = TOURISM	11
5	COUNTY CONTRIBUTE TO BLAIRSVILLE HEALTH AND FITNESS CENTER - \$ AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE	10
6	DEVELOP DRIVING TOUR - SCENIC VIEWS, HISTORIC SITES - BROCHURE	10
7	COUNTY COMPLEX IS SOUTHERN INDIANA COUNTY - POOL WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY - SCHOOLS, REHAB, AND THERAPY USE	9
8	ACCESS TO ARMY CORP PROPERTY - FOR FISHING, HIKING, MOUNTAIN CLIMBING, BOATING	8
9	NEED TO ADVERTISE ABOUT PARKS - GET PEOPLE TO PARKS - BETTER SIGNS, WORKING WEB SITE, MARKETING, MAPS LOCATING PARKS	8
10	MORE BENCHES ALONG TRAILS	8
11	BETTER ACCESS FOR NON-DRIVERS TO PARKS	7
12	SOUND LAND USE POLICIES = PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE	7
13	BETTER USE OF IUP INTERNS FOR PARK ADMINISTRATION (ESP. MUNICIPAL PARKS)	6
14	PUT MORE MONEY INTO COUNTY MAINTENANCE BUDGET	6
15	REGIONALIZE RECREATION SERVICES FOR FUNDING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	6
16	OPPORTUNITY - LIME KILN - 259 TO ROBINSON - "GERMANY" ONE ROOM SCHOOL - OLD CHURCH - 150 YEAR OLD SECOND CHURCH - PARK?, WALKING TRAIL?	5
17	COUNTY PARKS STAFF PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL PARKS - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	5
18	VANDAL-PROOF CLEAN RESTROOMS FOR WOMEN	5
19	PROVIDE MORE INTERPRETIVE SIGNS ON TRAILS - GOOD VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY	5

**PUBLIC MEETING #1 BRAINSTORMING
- JUNE 11, 2003 CONT.**

	<u>issue</u>	<u>votes</u>
20	PLAN FOR BUTTERFLY AREA?, HUMMING BIRD HABITATS? - GOOD ATTRACTIONS FOR PARK USERS	4
21	NEED HORSE TRAILS	3
22	PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF PARK BUDGETS/FUNDING ISSUES	3
23	NEED FACILITIES TO ATTRACT TEENS/YOUNG ADULTS, FOR TRAIL-OBSTACLE COURSE, CLIMBING WALL, SKATE PARKS - SHOW CONNECTION BETWEEN GOOD PARKS AND JOBS	3
24	NEED TO TRAIN PARK STAFF IN HOLDING SPECIAL EVENTS, PARK MAINTENANCE, ACCESS TO FUNDING, PLAYGROUND SAFETY	2
25	SOLICIT CORPORATE SPONSORS - BUILD FACILITIES, BENCHES	2
26	BUTTERMILK FALLS - ATTRACTION, ESPECIALLY THIS TIME OF YEAR - NEED LARGER SIGN	2
27	ACTIVE RECREATIONAL LIFESTYLE PROMOTED. EMPLOYERS ACCOMMODATE BIKE, WALKING COMMUTERS	1
28	GET PENNDOT JERSEY BARRIERS LOWERED - BLOCKS SCENIC VIEWS FROM CAR	1
29	MORE SUPPORT FOR PARK ACTIVITIES FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS	1
30	OPPORTUNITY - NATIONAL ARMORY - NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, TOURISM CENTER - TRAILS NEARBY	1
31	NEED TO PROVIDE FOR RV CAMPING - TOURISM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	1
32	COMBINE HISTORY WITH PARKS - ARCHEOLOGICAL DIGS - DISPLAYS AT PARK OFFICE	1
33	COUNTY TRAIL ORGANIZATION - SPONSORED/IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS	1
34	OTHER WAYS TO USE PARKS - LIKE OPEN AIR CONCERTS, ONE DAY ARTS FESTIVAL	-
35	ALIGNMENT OF TRAIL UNDER 119 - AVOID UNDERPASS, STAY ON ONE SIDE OF HIGHWAY	-
36	INTEGRATE TRAILS WITH SCHOOLS	-
37	PENNDOT NEEDS TO USE TRAFFIC CALMING - CONTACT SENSITIVE DESIGN	-
38	ASSET - 3 COUNTY PARKS - STATE PARKS	-
39	NEED ACCESSIBLE PARKING FOR DISABLED	-
40	HIKING TRAIL ALONG CONEMAUGH RIVER AT ROBINSON IS NEEDED	-

**PUBLIC MEETING #2 BRAINSTORMING
- JUNE 17, 2003**

	<u>issue</u>	<u>votes</u>
1	CONCERN WITH HOW TO FUND ALL THESE GOOD IDEAS	13
2	ACCESS TO WATER FOR LITTLE KIDS, LIKE TOM'S RUN	11
3	IDENTIFY "SPECIAL PLACES" THROUGHOUT COUNTY - EASEMENTS/ACQUISITION TO PRESERVE - PRIORITIZE FOR PROTECTION	10
4	CONTINUATION AND SUPPORT FOR LOCAL PLANNING, ADDRESS "SPECIAL PLACES" - SOUND LAND USE PLANNING	9
5	MORE ART/CULTURE - OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER FOR PLAYS/CONCERTS	9
6	PARK AREA SO DOGS CAN RUN FREE	9
7	FUNDING FOR MAINTENANCE OF TRAILS NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED	8
8	EXCELLENT FRIENDS OF PARK PROGRAMS "POUNDING FLOWERS" - FREE PROGRAMS	7
9	TOURING MAPS OF EXTRAORDINARY VIEWS, SCENIC ROADS	6
10	LARGE TRACTS OF UNINTERRUPTED LAND - WILDLIFE HABITAT - BIODIVERSITY - CONSERVATION ETHIC - EDUCATION/SPEAKERS/BUREAU/ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS	6
11	CONSIDER CONSERVATION EASEMENTS, OTHER PRESERVATION TOOLS	6
12	NEED PROGRAMS FOR PRE-TEENS AND TEENS	5
13	ENCOURAGE SIDEWALKS AND BIKE LANES WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT AND ROADS - AND EXISTING COMMUNITIES	5
14	OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE 3,000+ ACRES NORTH OF CONEMAUGH LAKE	5
15	INDIANA COUNTY HAS EFFICIENT AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF; GROUNDS ARE WELL MAINTAINED	5
16	ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES - INEXPENSIVE GROUP ACTIVITIES (SOCIAL INTERACTION)	5
17	"OUT MY BACK DOOR" ACCESS TO TRAILS, GREENWAYS, AND OPEN SPACE FOR NON-MOTORIZED USE - CONNECT IUP, SHOPPING, HOUSING	5
18	SHARE COUNTY PARK AND PLANNING EXPERTISE WITH LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS	4
19	NEED GREAT PLACES TO FISH - STOCKED	4
20	PROMOTE EMPLOYERS TO MAKE RECREATING EASIER FOR EMPLOYEES - ADVOCATE RECREATION FOR JOB ACCEPTANCE AND RETENTION - INCLUDE PARKS NEAR TRAILS	3

PUBLIC MEETING #2 BRAINSTORMING
- JUNE 17, 2003, CONT.

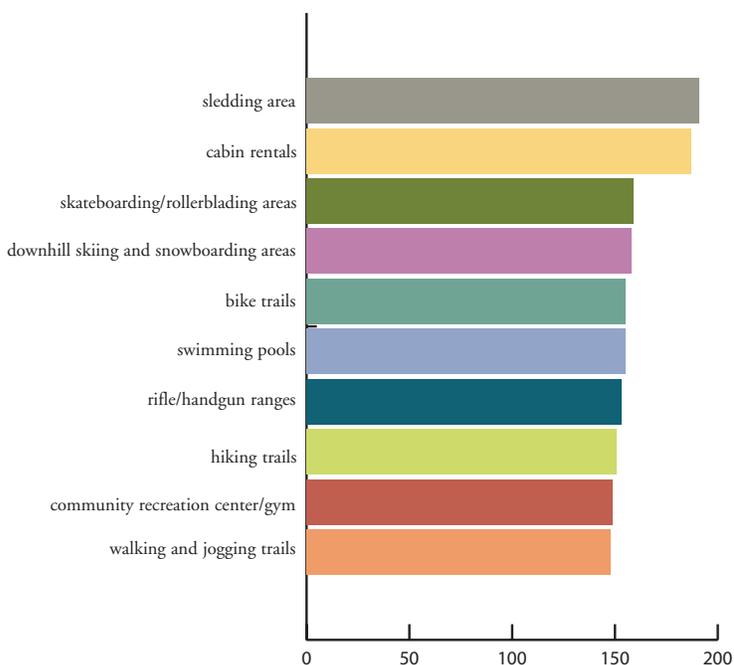
	<u>issue</u>	<u>votes</u>
21	IUP COLLEGE LODGE - NEXT TO WHITE'S WOODS, NEED TO PRESERVE! OLD FARM, SKI AREA	3
22	ARMY CORPS PROPERTY IS UNDER-UTILIZED. THEY NEED TO BE MORE INVOLVED AS RECREATION PROVIDER/HIKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING	3
23	PLANNING FOR GROWTH - INCLUDE PARKS	3
24	EASI - ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE FOR SENIOR INVOLVEMENT - NEED TO START A CONSERVANCY; FUND-SET-UP TROUT UNLIMITED	2
25	IDENTIFY AND MAINTAIN "BUFFERS" AROUND PARKS	1
26	DIFFERENT KINDS OF PARKS - VOLLEYBALL, OTHER ACTIVITIES	1
27	YELLOW K - IMPORTANT BIRD AREA - WORKING TO MAKE CREEK STATE PARK AN IMPORTANT MAMMAL AREA	-
28	PROVIDE A MCKEEVER-LIKE PLACE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AGES	-
29	"HEARTS AND PARKS" - PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES OPPORTUNITY - NATIONAL PROGRAM SPONSORED BY CDC	-
30	CONSIDER TRAIL AND PARK USERS PAY FOR USE; NEED MECHANISM TO DONATE MONEY DIRECTLY TO PARKS	-
31	PROVIDE SAFE PLACES IN PARKS	-
32	LACK OF LEVEL, PROGRAMMABLE SPACE-MARCHING BAND FOR EXAMPLE	-
33	NEED FOR QUALITY ADULT SOFTBALL FIELDS	-
34	SKATE PARK/BMX COURSE	-
35	BOATING - MORE AWARENESS OF EXISTING AREAS - MORE OPPORTUNITIES IN COUNTY	-
36	TRAPPING - LOST TO DEVELOPMENT - HISTORIC ACTIVITY	-
37	CONTINUE/ENHANCE/REACH OUT TO YOU IN REGION	-
38	HELP PEOPLE BECOME AWARE OF EVENTS - WORD OF MOUTH, SIGNS	-
39	ATV/DIRT BIKE USE - CONTROVERSIAL - TRAIL USE ADDRESSED - IS A FORM OF RECREATION	-
40	COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT - FOCUS ON PUBLIC LANDS AS WELL AS PRIVATE PROPERTIES	-

RECREATION SURVEY

In July, 2003, 3,000 recreation surveys were mailed to a random selection of Indiana County households. Three hundred and sixty-one (361) completed surveys were received and tabulated by the consultant for a response rate of twelve percent (12%).

Q-1. From the following list, please check the box representing your opinion on the number of recreational facilities needed in the County. Skip the facility if you have no opinion.

The ten facilities with the highest weighted averages are listed below.



Q-2. Please answer on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 indicates strongly agree and 5 indicates strongly disagree.

The weighted averages of the responses to each statement are identified below. The responses are listed according to their ranking from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). The largest number of respondents indicated that they are in the highest level of agreement with statement #8.

PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS NEAR WHERE I LIVE ARE WELL MAINTAINED. **3.5**

PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS NEAR WHERE I LIVE ARE ADEQUATELY POLICED. **3**

THERE ARE ENOUGH PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS CLOSE TO WHERE I LIVE. **3**

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO RECREATION AREAS NEAR WHERE I LIVE MEETS MY NEEDS. **3**

BOROUGH AND TOWNSHIPS IN MY AREA SHOULD BE PROVIDING MORE PARKS. **2.8**

INDIANA COUNTY SHOULD BE PROVIDING MORE PARKS. **2.8**

PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS AND PROGRAMS NEAR WHERE I LIVE ARE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISABILITIES. **2.75**

THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS NEAR WHERE I LIVE IS GOOD. **2.6**

PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS NEAR WHERE I LIVE ARE OPEN AT TIMES CONVENIENT FOR ME. **2.6**

MORE SHOULD BE DONE TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE AVAILABILITY OF RECREATION AREAS AND OPPORTUNITIES. **2.4**

The survey response rate was 12%.

Q-3. Do you feel that parks enhance your quality of life?

NOT AT ALL 7%
SOMEWHAT 44%
SIGNIFICANTLY 49%

Q-4. From the following list of priorities for funding, please rank them in order of importance 1 through 5. 1 is the most important.

The weighted averages of the responses to each statement are identified below. The responses are listed according to their ranking from most important (1) to least important (5). The largest number of respondents (51%) identified #2 as a highest priority.

PROVIDE MORE PROGRAMMING AT LOCAL PARKS.
3.4

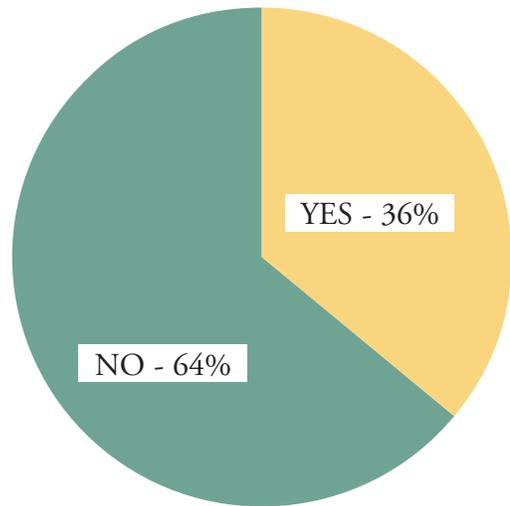
ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL LAND AND WATER AREAS FOR DEVELOPED RECREATION.
3.2

DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION ON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.
2.9

PROVIDE PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS AT COUNTY PARKS.
2.8

MAINTAIN EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION AREAS.
1.8

Q-5. Can you easily find information on recreational activities, parks, and sports leagues?

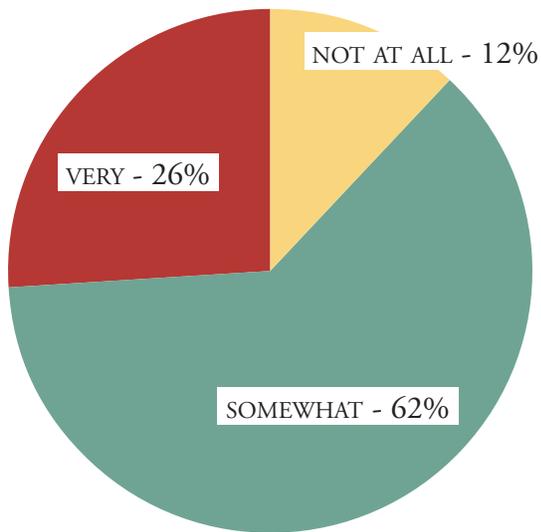


Q-6. How many visits do you make to each Indiana County park during a year?

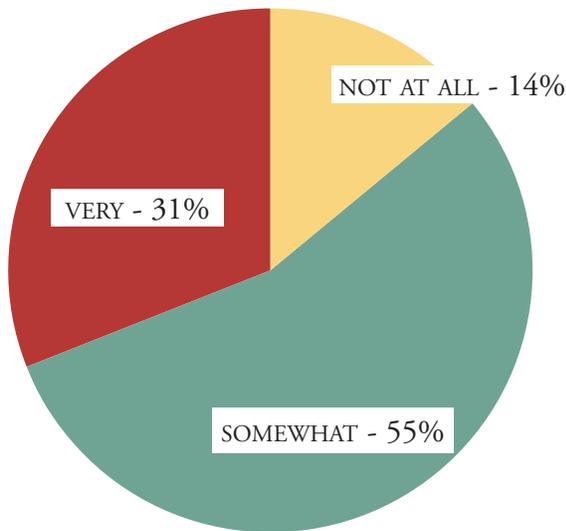
	<u>never</u>	<u>1-5</u>	<u>6-12</u>	<u>12+</u>
1. BLUE SPRUCE	39	231	51	23
2. PINE RIDGE	232	83	5	8
3. HEMLOCK LAKE	264	44	6	3
4. MEMORIAL PARK	156	137	23	9
5. GHOST TOWN TRAIL	182	129	10	10
6. BLACKLICK VALLEY	289	26	4	0
7. ELIZA FURNACE	255	57	4	3
8. HOODLEBUG TRAIL	158	116	26	29
9. BUTTERMILK FALLS	241	79	4	1
10. TUNNELVIEW	279	35	6	2

64% of respondents cannot easily find information on recreational opportunities.

Q-7. How important are the Indiana County Parks and Trails to your household?



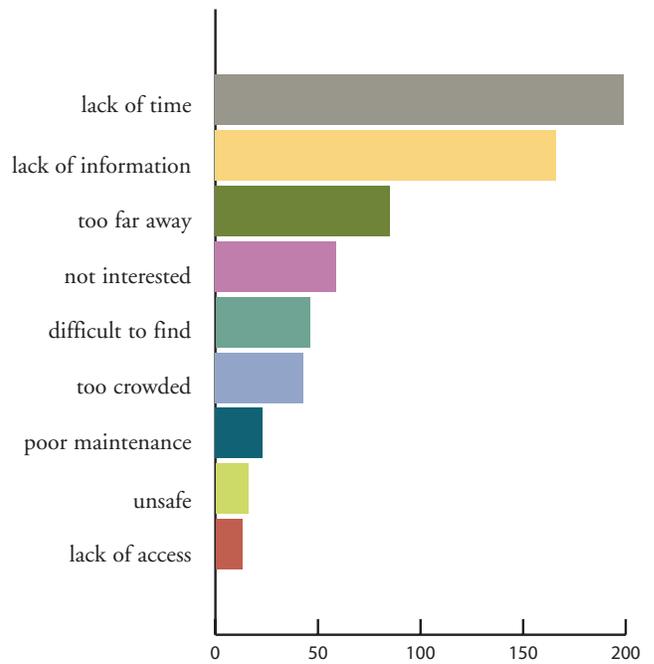
Q-8. How important are greenways, open space, and trails to your household?



Q-9. How far are you willing to travel to visit an Indiana County Park?

- 1. 0 TO 15 MINUTES **16%**
- 2. 16 TO 30 MINUTES **57%**
- 3. 30 TO 45 MINUTES **27%**

Q-10. What factors prevent members of your family from using Indiana County park facilities? Circle all that apply.

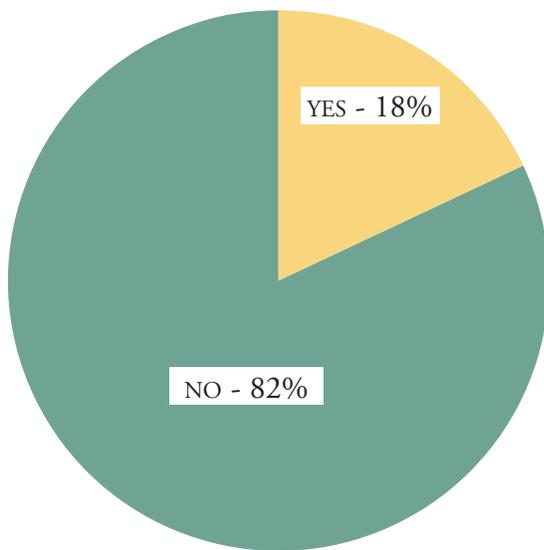


88% of respondents think the Indiana County Parks and Trails are somewhat or very important.

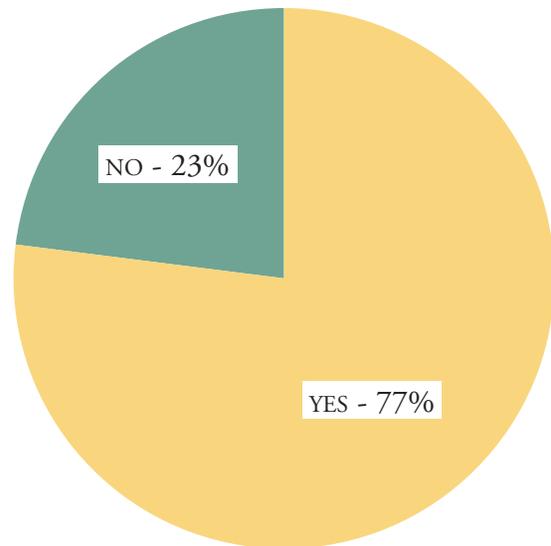
Q-11. If a non-profit Indiana County Parks and Trails foundation was created for the purpose of acquisition of additional park land, how much would your household be willing to contribute each year?

1. \$10/YEAR - 26%
2. \$20/YEAR - 18.5%
3. \$50/YEAR - 9%
4. \$100/YEAR - 1%
5. \$500/YEAR - .6%
6. NONE - 44%

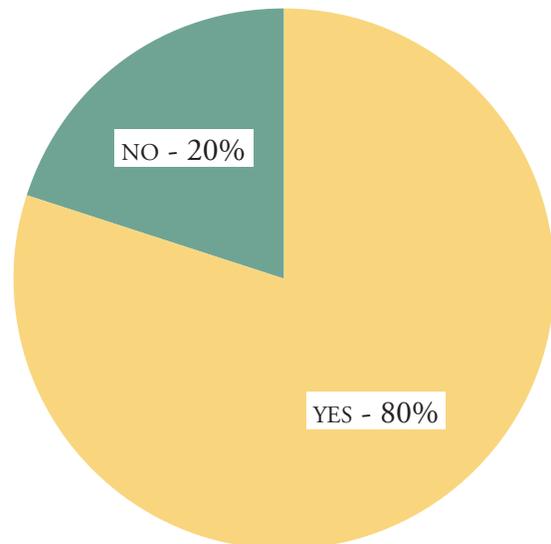
Q-12. Should Indiana County consider charging a user or entrance fee to County Parks to make more funds available for park maintenance and operations?



Q-13. Should outdoor recreational opportunities for tourism be expanded and enhanced?



Q-14. Do you consider your community a safe place to walk and ride a bike?



56% of respondents would contribute to an Indiana County Parks and Trails Foundation.

Q -15. Please circle the number of people in your household in each age group.

The ages of the population represented by the survey respondents closely reflects the ages of the County’s total population.

	<u>survey</u>	<u>2000 census</u>
0-9	10%	10.7%
10-14	6%	6.2%
15-19	9%	9.3%
20-34	15.5%	22.3%
35-64	47.5%	36.7%
65+	12%	14.9%

Q-16. What is your zip code?

15618 (Avonmore / Edmon)	.28%
15681 (Saltsburg)	2.77%
15701 (Indiana)	44.88%
15713 (Aultman / Homer City)	.28%
15717 (Blairsville)	11.63%
15724 (Cherry Tree)	1.66%
15725 (Clarksburg)	2.22%
15728 (Clymer)	5.54%
15729 (Commodore)	.83%
15732 (Creekside)	1.39%
15742 (Glen Campbell)	1.39%
15747 (Home)	2.77%
15748 (Homer City/Graceton/Waterton)	8.59%
15759 (Marion Center)	3.32%
15765 (Penn Run)	1.94%
15771 (Rochester Mills)	.83%
15772 (Rossitor)	1.66%
15774 (Shelocta)	2.77%
15777 (Starford)	.28%
15920 (Armagh)	.55%
15949 (Robinson)	.55%
15957 (Strongstown)	.83%
16256 (Smicksburg)	1.11%

17. Feel free to provide additional comments regarding Indiana County’s parks and recreation opportunities, including your likes and dislikes, using the space below.

A copy of the recorded comments were provided to the County, separate from this document.

KEY PERSON INTERVIEWS

Throughout the development of this plan, the Consultant conducted twenty-eight Key Person Interviews. The interviewees were identified by the Study Committee as individuals who could provide valuable input regarding parks and recreation issues in Indiana County. This survey technique was used as an additional way to understand and document the needs of area residents. The following is a summary of responses from the twenty-eight people interviewed.

1. What are the strengths of the Indiana County Parks and Trails System?

- Distributed well throughout County and very accessible 15
- Size adequate for County's needs 4
- Diverse activities and options 12
- Programs 5
- Friends of Park program is excellent and highly recommended 3
- Varied outdoor programs 2
- Do an excellent job in light of their limited resources
- Trail system 5
- Ghost Town Trail is a great family trail 2
- Has developed lots of interest
- High quality administration/director and progressive 9
- Ed Patterson 4
- And his assistant
- Availability 5
- Used extensively
- Provides an outlet for IUP's students
- Excellent care and maintenance of what exists 5
- Christmas lighting is beautiful 3
- Parks are beautiful 3
- Good facilities 2
- There's a park for big kids and one for little kids too
- Good and clear vision of what needs done 2
- Unique cross section of parks
- Boating

- Hemlock Lake's wilderness
- Blue Spruce's wilderness and developed options
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Hiking
- Walking
- Excellent website
- Master gardeners program
- Innovative
- Environmentally well handled; Pine Ridge does a great job of utilizing naturally occurring materials
- Peaceful and serene
- Widely used
- Officials that are sent for training; training program is excellent
- Excellent community participation in programs
- Progressing (acquisition of new land)
- Good security
- Excellent overall
- Good commission support
- Wide variety of ground
- Ordinances protecting parks and rec. are upheld
- Dog friendly
- Inexpensive
- Not crowded
- Serves a wide scope of ages
- There is good County support and good boards
- Zoning board keeps them nice
- Don't know; there aren't any in the Northern part of the County to have strengths

2. What are the weaknesses of the Indiana County Parks System?

- None 6
- Funding (not enough) 6
 - Maintenance workers underpaid
 - Subject to political whims
 - Need more to maintain good upkeep
- Need more awareness of what exists 3
 - Not advertised well enough
- Not enough bike trails and connections to existing parks 2
- Vandalism 2

“The Ghost Town Trail is a great family trail.”

- Northern part of County has no recreational opportunities 2
 - Mediocre facilities options
 - No facilities for extreme sports
 - No bus routes to take people to parks
 - Get rid of geese
 - No pool
 - Need a place to rent bikes
 - Especially on Hoodlebug Trail and Indiana
 - Field use is overpriced for intramural activities
 - IUP has ceased to use facilities for this reason
 - Understaffed, though they still do an excellent job
 - Need more wiggly bridges in parks
 - Too many cultural objects; gas wells and timbering ruins the landscape
 - That I'm not real familiar with what exists
 - Ghost Town Trail stream could be cleaned up
 - The attempt to link Rails to Trails doesn't include Yellow Creek State Park and it should
 - Severely lacking in wintertime activities
 - Need quiet winter sports; cross country skiing, ice skating, etc.
 - Too limiting in some areas; prohibition of alcohol, fires, swimming, fishing, etc. prevents from using parks; perhaps if there was a large group event, there could be an additional fee for alcohol allowance; there ought be restrictions of course, but there are too many as they are now
3. Are there specific facilities the County should consider adding to the County Park System?
- More bike/hiking trails 7
 - Need better and increased networking and interconnecting 2
 - Horse trails 2
 - No 5
 - Just Ghost Town Trail finished
 - More fields 4
 - Soccer
 - Public swimming facility 3
 - Existing pool too crowded
 - Restrooms 3
4. What do you feel is the most urgent need facing parks & recreation in Indiana County?
- All ages multi-purpose facility 2
 - Use Louisville, CO as a model
 - Need parks in Northern part of County 2
 - Need parks along the creek
 - Better parking
 - Skate park
 - Ice skating area/rink
 - Bus routes to parks
 - Indoor facilities; field houses, gyms
 - Cross country ski rental
 - Little children's wading pools (see Europe)
 - Depends on what becomes available resource-wise; as long as there's money to support it, can't have too much
 - Some picnic shelters/pavilions at Hemlock Lake
 - Anything that's put in needs protected from vandalism
 - Need better and more trail markings/guides and educational markings as well
 - Rails to Trails system is still operating independently of County Parks System; need integrated and connected into each other
 - Outdoor basketball courts
 - Large rustic amphitheater for plays, concerts, etc. (clam shell-like stage)
 - Bandstand
 - Assess the different quadrants of the county; determine if availability is appropriate to each; add if necessary
 - Ewings Mill along 422; it's the oldest working water turn and needs work and revitalization
 - Dog park

“More biking and hiking trails are needed.”

- Protect from further development 2
 - Protect from any more well drilling or timbering 2
 - Need resource extraction prevention
 - Preservation of more open space
 - Extension of bike trails in/to Northwood and Indiana borough
 - Many people don't know who to call to reserve facilities/find out about what's available, etc.; needs to be a core person. A bit unapproachable now
 - Public restroom facilities in the Borough
 - Maintain what exists
 - Increase funding for increased need
 - Could use more staffing
 - More courts
 - More fields
 - Rails to Trails system finished; development security
 - Funding commitment
 - Getting people out there
 - Need to link all the parks by bike trails (need to tie system together)
 - Strong leadership
 - Acquisition of additional land
 - Parks and recreation are under utilized; public doesn't know enough about them
 - Parks and recreation in Northern part of County
5. Are there any locations in the County that could benefit from additional County parks and/or recreation services? If so, where and what?
- No 7
 - Northern part of County 7
 - Mahoning Creek needs parks, canoes, fly fishing, etc.
 - Specifically Northwest; Smicksburg 2
 - Smicksburg has become a very popular area; could benefit from a County park
 - Don't know 6
 - Northwood and Indiana extension of bike trails: the railroad would be ideal for this
 - Tool Lake; environmental open space preservation
- East Pike Road bike trail and recreation area; expand
 - Any place
 - Saltsburg area
 - Basketball courts at Mac. Park and Getty Heights
 - Pine Ridge- horse trails
 - Place for ATVs
 - Hardened trails and regulate hours
 - Maintain what exists; especially the new trail
 - Blue Spruce needs more playgrounds
 - Maybe down towards Brush Valley
 - Assess different quadrants of the county; determine if availability is appropriate to each; add if necessary
6. Should the County provide more recreational programming? What kinds of programs? (Festivals, camps, interest groups...)
- Yes 15
 - Cultural programs expanded 2
 - Summer concerts
 - Look into what's needed and promote it if there's an interest 2
 - In Northern part of County 2
 - There are no Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts or anything else for that matter
 - Anything for kids
 - Passive parks need more in nature programming
 - Advertise better what exists
 - Conservancy initiative; preserve areas
 - Environmental day camps
 - More activity-based recreational opportunities for the casual user
 - As long as there's enough money to back it
 - Nature and family oriented
 - Elderly programming
 - Dog space
 - Rock climbing class
 - Children's programs of minimal expense
 - More arts and crafts
 - Cross country skiing clinics
 - Fly fishing clinics

“The northern part of the County could benefit from additional County parks and/or recreation services.”

- Orienteering
 - Mini triathlon
 - Adventure racing
 - Paddling
 - Orienteering
 - Mountain biking
 - Organized bike rides
 - More organized activities; people won't get active unless its organized
 - Need to mobilize resources
- No 10
 - Friends of Park program covers all programming needs 2
 - Leave this to the municipalities or at the most work together 2
 - No place to put more athletic events; overbooked
 - Need to harness more volunteerism for this
 - The County ought to facilitate opportunities for people to provide programming 3
 - Need to mobilize existing resources
 - County can't afford to do programs, but volunteers could if there was a way to
 - Don't know
7. How can Indiana County develop stronger public support for parks and recreation services?
- Continue advertising in local media 12
 - Newspapers 6
 - Maybe do some big articles featuring the parks and what's available
 - Radio 3
 - Newsletter 2
 - Emails
 - People need to know what's available 4
 - Provide new families moving in to area with a packet on parks and rec. in Indiana County along with historical opportunities; Smicksburg, IUP, etc.; put them together rather than everything staying independent of each other (perhaps Chamber of Commerce could help with this to cut down on costs for County parks and rec. budget)
- Need more advertising and more elaborate than newspaper blurbs
 - Continue existing website 2
 - Word of mouth 2
 - Flyers 2
 - Organize a committee/volunteers to put together festivals highlighting each park throughout usable times of year; highlight what makes park unique and make each park the center of attention in its own individual festival
 - Continue what they're doing in the trails (attracts a different user base)
 - More publicity needed for overall opportunities; need a joint effort and not just publicity of independent parks, especially for White's Woods, White Twp., and Indiana Borough
 - Well marked signs
 - Don't know
 - Open discussion and long range planning in educating public
 - Continue this process and in addition ask kids at schools for feedback (do survey of them)
 - Organized outreach program to get people to parks
 - There's strong support now; the system is well thought of
 - Rails to Trails if hitting a broader range of people; need to continue on that track and better integrate this system into parks
 - Keep them clean and interesting
 - Keep them as close to nature as possible
 - Change people's attitudes; there's more to life than TV and Bingo
 - Provide pamphlets on business bulletin boards for employees; this avoids a solicitation problem
 - Have a direct deposit option from paychecks for donations (like United Way does)
 - Present slide presentations for service clubs
 - Let people know what a great and extensive job that is being done with such limited resources
 - Has to start with county commissioners
 - Meet with people to get something going in Northern part of County

“More publicity is needed for recreational opportunities.”

8. Do you have an opinion on the current parks and recreation management and administration?
- It is excellent 10
 - They are underpaid for the quality of work that they do 5
 - Ed Patterson does miracles with the funding he's given 4
 - Patterson just doesn't get enough accolades from "those in charge"
 - Very good 7
 - Especially in light of their limited resources 2
 - Pretty good 3
 - Except that they need to have more volunteers adopt-a-park for clean up
 - Competent director
 - Just need more money for maintenance
 - Limited knowledge, but what I know is positive 3
 - High quality
 - Progressive in changes in facilities
 - Positive; easy to deal with
 - Tough to break in bureaucracy
 - No - no involvement with Northern part of County
9. From your experience(s), do you feel the County parks are well maintained?
- Yes 27
 - Except that there's too much mulch in the playgrounds; get splinters and it gets in your sandals
 - But I don't really know as there's nothing in the North
 - No
 - Vandalism is a major problem
10. What kind of relationship should exist between Indiana County and:
- Municipalities that have parks & recreation departments?
 - Cooperative 9
 - * Share facilities 4
 - * Coordination and bring public schools into the equation; all these areas are taxpayers' money areas - integrate them to make seamless whole
 - * Share programs 2
 - * Share maintenance 2
 - * Share equipment
 - * Working relationship 2
 - Prevent duplication of services 6
 - Increased communication 4
 - Needs to be strong and valuable 3
 - * Not sure how to do this
 - Need to stay separate but munic. could go to County for information, consultation, ideas, and technical support 3
 - Joint council of administrators 2
 - * County-wide committee to coordinate recreation at state, county, and local levels; "umbrella group"
 - Leadership role ought to be the County's
 - None; if municipality wants something, that's their business and responsibility 2
 - * Avoid bureaucracy
 - County parks can't take place of municipal parks but they need to work together even in spite of their different priorities 2
 - Don't know 2
 - Hold regional meetings to give people access to the meetings in N. part of County
 - Municipalities ought to pay fee for County parks
 - Look for economic resources
 - Develop programs
 - Integrate parks and recreation
 - County parks don't need fields, etc. if municipalities do
 - Cohesiveness
 - Mutually beneficial
 - Friendly relationship
 - County could help publicize parks
 - Joint security concerns
 - Need fewer independent commissions
 - Currently not able to maintain a professional staff; this needs to change

“Current parks and recreation management and administration is excellent.”

- Everyone just needs to work together
- None
- The key is that the park system is optimized; not who's in control of it
- If it's sensible for the County to maintain munic. parks (efficiency, fundraising, expertise, knowledge, etc.) then do it
- Don't have people in there that say one thing and do another
- Complementary rather than competitive
- Need to stay autonomous
- Municipalities with parks, but no departments?
 - County could/should assist in developing parks 3
 - County ought to play a major role
 - * If it has the money
 - Need a key individual to promote municipality's opportunities - full-time or very committed part-time 2
 - * Needs connected to County recreation and maybe township
 - None; if municipality wants something, that's their responsibility 2
 - County should take lead and offer services 2
 - * But not necessarily finance it
 - Notify County/keep in touch 2
 - Township supervisors need to reach out and need to have committees with an active role in parks and recreation
 - County could develop a security plan
 - How do they function?
 - Municipality ought to promote County parks and rec.
 - Talk and discover feasibility
 - County could act as department and let municipality know what exists
 - If the municipality doesn't want it, then the County could explore it
 - Different priorities, still need to work together
 - Complementary rather than competitive
 - Cooperative; need to be part of unified whole
 - Everyone just needs to work together
- All could use each others
- The key is that the park system is optimized; not who's in control
- If it's sensible for the County to maintain munic. parks (efficiency, fundraising, expertise, knowledge, etc.) then do it
- Don't know 2
- Municipalities with no parks in their jurisdiction?
 - County could/should assist in developing parks/work together 7
 - * County should play a major role
 - * Need green space; if there's a need then the County should fill that need
 - * But not necessarily finance it
 - Don't know 4
 - * Depends on money
 - Need to recognize that some can't have parks 2
 - None 2
 - * If munic. wants something, that's their business and responsibility
 - Municipality's responsibility, but needs to keep the County informed
 - Until municipality wants a park, they're "out of the loop"; munic. needs to take initiative
 - Township supervisors need to reach out and need to have committees/boards with active interest and involvement with parks and recreation
 - Municipality ought to promote County parks
 - Don't have any like that and County already has enough parks
 - County could act as department and provide for any outstanding needs
 - If the municipality doesn't want it, then the County could explore it
 - There shouldn't be a huge wall between users and controllers of parks; should collaborate more
 - There are enough County parks in centralized locations that municipalities probably don't need any more
 - Cooperative; need to be part of a unified whole

- Inexcusable
- Everyone just needs to work together
- If the County puts in the park, the munic. won't take care of it
- County could keep munic. informed as to what's going on
- Key is that the park system is optimized; not who's in control
- If it's sensible for the County to maintain munic. parks (efficiency, fundraising, expertise, knowledge, etc.) then do it

11. Additional comments.

- Build with idea of attracting and keeping people in community
- County really needs to provide more money for those people/positions already in place
- Safer areas to bike; never can have too many trails; this is problem mostly in White Township
- Rails to Trails group; need coordination with parks
- Need to protect environmentally pristine areas
 - * Need to do a biodiversity study and first discover what we have
- Need to recognize IUP's relationship to parks and recreation; need awareness and influence/role that IUP's staff and students play
- Allegheny arboretum needs better links to community; present plan to community to create awareness of how it will fit into long range plan; Jerry Pickering gave permission to give/use his name and contact in this process
- Great program for what they have
- Prefer more undeveloped land than developed land
- Strong supporter and hold the Indiana County parks and rec. in the highest regard
- There is a budget crisis however; don't have adequate resources
- Really need professionals to assess needs and act accordingly as to what needs done to fulfill those needs
- There are 2 dump sites that are going to be

- available for public ownership down the road; County needs to have a broader vision and needs to move to make that ownership happen
- Yellow Creek and other parks are under utilized and many people don't know they exist; they all really need promoted and we need to somehow figure out how to get the word out
- There is a definite disparity between what County parks and rec. employees get paid and what County courthouse employees get paid; parks and rec. people work more hours and for less money; this needs looked at and amended
- IUP's relationship to area parks and rec. needs looked at; why aren't more students utilizing the great programs available? IUP's recreational opportunities have died from lack of interest
- The state is too restrictive with grants; legislators need to make this a bigger priority; Marion County doesn't qualify for grants and it should
- There is nothing in the Northern part of the County; Township supervisors keep the roads clear but do little else. They need to form committees and be a lot more active in these areas

Chapter 3



Chapter 3

Vision and Goals for the Future Recommendations and Implementation

Successful long-range planning begins with a Vision or “picture” of how recreation, parks, and open space in Indiana County should appear sometime in the future. The Goals will provide specific guidance for the implementation of the recommended actions.

By developing a methodology that works in simple, clear steps, an agency can understand and communicate to staff and the general public where it wants to go (the Vision and Goals) and exactly how it can get there (recommendations). This is especially important when seeking support for a new program, special event or facility. People will be more inclined to support a project if it is an important part of the overall Vision for the future.

How do residents of Indiana County see parks and recreation in their community years from now? To arrive at the Vision and Goals for the County, the consultant analyzed the results of the public participation process, including study committee and focus group meetings, public input sessions, key person interviews, and the results of the citizen survey. During the course of this analysis, the consultant looked for ideas consistently mentioned throughout the public process. These elements were then used to form the Vision and Goals.

Included in each section of this chapter is a goal for the future of recreation and parks in Indiana County. The goals are broad in nature and are based upon community issues raised through the planning process. The goal statements reflect themes that were identified through the public input process and collectively comprise the Vision for the Future. These goals also provide the organizational structure for the implementation of the recommendations and direction for the future of recreation and parks in the County.

V I S I O N A N D G O A L S F O R T H E F U T U R E

Vision

Parks, recreation, and open space provide significant benefits to the County's high quality of life. Indiana County is dedicated to maintaining and improving the parks, recreation, and open space its citizens use and enjoy.

Goals

The County will work to **strengthen cooperation** among local communities, the county, state and federal governments, non-profit organizations, private landowners, businesses and other groups and individuals, in order to implement the strategies of this plan.

Provide and maintain a **comprehensive park and recreation system** throughout the County that will include local, county, state, and federal park properties.

Develop an **extensive countywide trail system** to include non-motorized, bicycling, hiking, and walking trails that run along side roads and streams and through the county's business districts, parks, neighborhoods and open spaces.

Support the efforts of local, regional, and state partners, both public and private, to implement an **interconnected system of greenways and open spaces that protect the natural environment**.

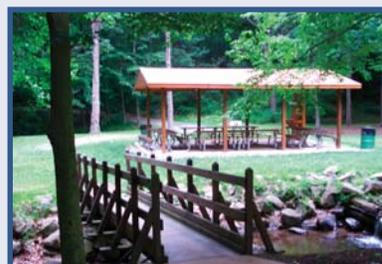
Provide the resources necessary to **maintain the Indiana County Parks and Trails system** as the foundation of the county system, providing regional parks and recreational opportunities for persons of all ages, interests, and abilities.

Aggressively pursue a **variety of funding opportunities** for additions, improvements and acquisitions to the county parks.

Capitalize on **opportunities for recreational and nature based tourism**.

Advance the county economy in a sustainable manner.

Promote active, healthy lifestyles for all Indiana County residents.



These recommendations will provide guidance to the decision-makers of Indiana County and those parties responsible for the implementation of recommendations. Successful implementation of this Plan will depend upon the fiscal and political climate in any given year. Therefore, it is essential that the County monitor, review, and prioritize the strategies on an annual basis prior to the budgeting process.

Each recommendation was assigned a ranking of High, Medium, or Low. This prioritization was developed with input from the Study Committee and County staff and officials. A high (H) ranking suggests that the strategy be implemented in the first one to two years following the adoption of this Plan. Medium (M) ranking strategies are to be implemented in the third to sixth year and Low (L) ranking strategies are to be implemented in the seventh to tenth year.

Cost estimates are also included for each strategy. It will be important for the County to be up-to-date on future funding sources. Detailed cost estimates should be developed as a particular recommendation is selected for implementation.

STRENGTHEN COOPERATION

GOAL

The County will work to strengthen cooperation among local communities; the county, state, and federal governments; non-profit organizations; private landowners; businesses; and other groups and individuals, in order to implement the strategies of this plan.

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
1	Post this Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan on the County Parks website.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
2	Develop a publicity plan to encourage cooperation among agencies and municipalities for parks, recreation, and open space.	H	ICOPD	\$500	Indiana County	
3	Provide a page on the County Parks website discussing how organizations can cooperate in implementing the strategies for this plan.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$500	Indiana County	
4	Provide training and education opportunities for organizations and agencies to better understand how they can cooperate with others in improving parks, recreation, and open space in the County.	M	ICOPD and Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$500	Indiana County	

COMPREHENSIVE PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM

County Park Planning Goals

(from General Management Guidelines for the Administration of the Indiana County Parks and Trails System)

GOAL

Provide and maintain a comprehensive park and recreation system throughout the County that will include local, county, state, and federal park properties.

Planning for future development and operation of the park system is an important management responsibility. To aid in future planning efforts, a series of general guidelines have been established. They are:

- Physical features, development, and visitor use should be limited to only that necessary to accomplish management goals of the park.
- Acceptable development or rehabilitation of a park will be undertaken only to the extent that it aids in the preservation and enjoyment of the park; and offers environmentally acceptable access, including reasonable access for the physically and mentally challenged.
- The location and design of new facilities and development should be done in a manner which is guided by the environmental conditions of the resource area.
- All design, materials, facilities, and equipment needed in the operation of parks must consider the long-term operation and maintenance costs.
- In all programs, functions, and actions, the county park system should provide a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities in an economically efficient manner.

County Park Criteria

(from General Management Guidelines for the Administration of the Indiana County Parks and Trails System)

Regardless of the classification of the resource area, as many of the following criteria as possible should apply to all county parks. County parks should:

- be complete areas with logical boundaries;
- have natural, historical, or recreational features of county-wide significance;
- be of sufficient size to allow adequate or reasonable use and contain a sufficient buffer from unwanted encroachment;
- contain features that are outstanding, unique or distinctive within the county;
- provide for, or be made to provide for, as many forms of outdoor recreation as reasonable;
- be of a scale or magnitude worthy for inclusion in the county park system.

Acquisition and Development

(from General Management Guidelines for the Administration of the Indiana County Parks and Trails System)

The acquisition of parkland is vital to the County park system and should continue in appropriate amounts to meet the needs of the future. Land and waters for parks and recreation uses should be acquired fee simple when possible, however, the county reserves the right to enter into lease agreements, easements or other appropriate conditions for properties that have significant park and recreational value.

Condemnation of private property for park and recreation purposes will be used only if other methods of property acquisition are unsuccessful and only as a last resort.

Indiana County Parks and Trails welcomes the gift of land, water, and structures for park and recreation purposes, provided such donations meet the criteria for county parks. Such gifts or donations should not contain provisions which would limit their use for the park and recreation purposes by the general public.

County Role in Local Parks and Recreation

The County's role in local parks and recreation should be primarily through the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development (ICOPD) in providing planning and technical assistance. The ICOPD should work with individual municipalities, as well as groups of municipalities, to provide information, administrative and technical assistance. They should strive to keep local municipalities aware of current standards for parks and recreation and available state and federal grant programs.

ICOPD should encourage local municipalities to undertake local planning efforts and, when possible, multi-municipal planning.

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
1	Utilize the ICOPD to provide information, administrative, and technical support to local municipalities in their efforts to upgrade their recreational facilities. This may include meeting with local recreation boards or elected officials, assistance in evaluation of facilities and recreational needs, encouraging cooperation with other municipalities or school districts, or assistance in planning efforts.	H	ICOPD	\$0	N/A	
2	Support organizations and local governments in their efforts to identify potential funding sources (provide technical assistance, fill out applications, identify grant sources, provide letters of support, and partner as co-applicants).	H	ICOPD	\$0	N/A	
3	Improve local park facilities that are shown as being in fair or poor condition in the inventory charts on pages 75-81.	H	Local municipalities	Varies by facility	DCNR Grant and local municipal funds	
4	Undertake a County-wide project to conduct Playground Safety Audits at all local playgrounds.	H	IOCPD	\$20,000	DCNR and Indiana County	
5	Bring all local playgrounds into compliance with current playground safety standards. The Playground Safety Audits will identify needed improvements.	H	Local municipalities	Varies by facility	DCNR Grant and local municipal funds	
6	Encourage the development of multi-municipal parks and recreation planning. Small rural municipalities should develop multi-municipal plans that include a specific section dealing with local parks and recreation. More populated areas such as the Indiana Borough/White Township area, Center Township/Homer City area, and Blairsville area should consider development of Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plans. Master Site Plans may need to be developed for individual parks.	H	IOCPD	\$15,000 - \$50,000 each	N/A	

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
7	Local municipalities should utilize the DCNR Small Communities Grant Program to improve playgrounds and undertake park improvements.	H	Local municipalities	Varies by facility	DCNR and local municipal funds	
8	Implement the Blairsville Waterfront Greenway Master Site Plan	H	Local municipalities	See the Master Site Plan	DCNR and local municipal funds	
9	Assist local communities in identifying opportunities for the development of a regional skate park.	M	ICOPD	\$0	N/A	
10	Assist in the implementation of the Old Smicksburg Park Master Plan by identifying grant sources, assist with grant writing and providing technical assistance.	M				
11	Strengthen cooperation with the Army Corps on Engineers to increase awareness of an access to recreation opportunities at Mahoning Dam, such as hiking, fishing, and hunting. This will fulfill the deficiency of County parks in the northeast corner of the County.	I	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
12	Create a website to serve as a clearinghouse of information on recreation opportunities throughout the County. Visitors to the site will be able to find information on the are parks including hours of operation, available facilities, activity schedules, programming, and contact, reservation, and registration information.	I	Indiana County IT Department	\$0	N/A	
13	Adopt and ordinance barring ATV use in County Parks to prevent environmental degradation.	I	ICOPD	\$0	N/A	
14	Revise the County Parks General Guidelines concerning Acquisition to reflect its current position of being selective about the locations and types of land it is willing to acquire.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	

GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

As a rural county with many natural areas, Indiana County has unique opportunities for the development of a successful greenway and open space system. County government, from a vantage point which permits a county-wide outlook, is uniquely positioned to update documentation of conservation efforts, highlight achievements, and identify key areas in need of protection.

In developing a County greenway and open space system, key components include: riparian buffers, woodlands, forested areas, agricultural lands, and other areas of natural significance.

Waterways are often important parts of a greenway and open space system. When planning the extent of greenway corridors that include waterways, it is important not to limit protected areas to narrow strips of vegetation paralleling the stream. Because they are intended for conservation, greenway corridors should not only include the stream valley, but also sensitive natural features associated with the stream. The size of the riparian buffer needed to protect stream quality should be carefully considered. Buffer areas help to control sedimentation, reduce pollution associated with runoff, affect air and water temperatures, provide habitat for wildlife supported by the stream, and enhance the quality of recreational experiences. The importance of adequate riparian buffers as an essential factor in water and habitat quality cannot be over-stressed.

When implementing greenway development, feasibility studies will be needed to more closely determine the boundaries of natural areas in need of protection and the appropriate use for each area.

GOAL

Support the efforts of local, regional, and state partners, both public and private, to implement an interconnected system of greenways and open spaces that protect the natural environment.

Develop an extensive countywide trail system to include non-motorized bicycling, hiking, and walking trails that run along side roads and streams and through the County's business districts, parks, neighborhoods, and open spaces.

POTENTIAL GREENWAYS IN INDIANA COUNTY

There are several greenway opportunities within Indiana County. Greenways could conserve natural areas, provide recreational opportunities, and link key community resources. The County's natural features are important assets that help define the County's rural character. Identification of riparian corridors and natural areas for protection will ensure these important resources are protected as future development may occur. Within key greenway connections, recreational trails may link important destinations such as county parks, historical sites, and local recreation facilities. The designation of a greenway corridor encourages a systematic approach to natural resource conservation, historic preservation, and development of a county-wide trail system.

As previously explained in the summary of the Pennsylvania Greenways Plan, Indiana County should undertake the development of a County Greenways Plan. This plan will look at greenway opportunities throughout the County. As a starting point, the following potential greenways should be explored in greater detail.

Little Mahoning Greenway

The Little Mahoning Greenway will create a east-west corridor running through the northern section of the County. The potential greenway follows the Mahoning and Little Mahoning Creeks and runs through seven townships. The potential greenway also includes the State Gamelands in Grant and Banks Townships and Hemlock Lake County Park.

Hubs

- State Gamelands #174
- State Gamelands #262
- Hemlock Lake County Park

Plumville Greenway

The Plumville Greenway connects Plumville to the Mahoning Greenway in South Mahoning Township.

Hubs

- Plumville recreation facilities
- Plumville to McCormick Trail (proposed)

Crooked Creek Greenway

The Crooked Creek Greenway is in the west-central portion of the County. The potential greenway runs from the town of Shelocta at the County's western edge to Blue Spruce County Park. The historic Thomas Covered Bridge is along the way.

Hubs

- Shelocta recreation facility
- Creekside recreation facility
- Blue Spruce County Park
- Thomas Covered Bridge
- Ernest Recreation Facility (planned)

Two Lick Greenway

The Two Lick Greenway runs from the Hoodlebug Greenway through the Two Lick Reservoir to the town of Clymer.

Hubs

- Two Lick Reservoir
- State Gamelands #248
- Clymer recreation facilities

Hoodlebug Greenway

The Hoodlebug Greenway runs through the south-central portion of the County between the Conemaugh River at Blairsville and Indiana Borough. This Potential Greenway follows the Hoodlebug Trail for much of its route.

Hubs

- Hoodlebug Trail
- Indiana Borough recreation facilities
- Homer City recreation facilities
- Indiana County Mack Park
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- Blairsville Borough Recreation Facilities
- Burrell Township
- Pine Ridge County Park
- Center Township Recreation Facilities
- Gamelands #153
- Gamelands #276

Yellow Creek Greenway

The Yellow Creek Greenway would link the Hoodlebug Greenway with Yellow Creek State Park.

Hubs

- Yellow Creek State Park
- State Gamelands #273

Conemaugh River Greenway

The Conemaugh River Greenway follows the River along the County's southern border. This Greenway is a portion of the proposed Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway and also includes a feeder from Aultman Run.

The West Penn Trail serves as the beginning of this greenway. It is a twelve-mile trail from Saltsburgh to the Westinghouse Plant near Blairsville.

Hubs

- Saltsburg recreation facilities
- Tunnelview Historic Site
- Historic Blairsville
- State Gamelands #153
- Buttermilk Falls County Park

Black Lick Greenway

The Black Lick Greenway runs through the southeastern corner of the County from the Hoodlebug Greenway to the Eliza Furnace Historic Site near the County's eastern border, following the Ghost Town Trail.

Hubs

- Pine Ridge County Park
- Ghost Town Trail
- Eliza Furnace Historic Site
- Black Lick Valley Natural Area
- State Gamelands #79

Susquehanna Greenway

This greenway begins at Cherry Tree and travels through Clearfield, Centre, Clinton, Lycoming, Union, Northumberland, Columbia, Luzerne, Wyoming, and Bradford Counties. It also includes the West and North Branches of the Susquehanna Water Trail.

Hub

- Cherry Tree Borough

Greenways and Trails Plan

A key step following adoption of this County Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan is to complete a Greenways and Trails Plan to make specific recommendations for future designation of greenway corridors and development of recreational and commuter trail connections. Some of the elements this plan should address include:

- identify county-wide trail connections and opportunities for open space conservation;
- identify trail routes that link key destinations (including schools and parks) throughout the County;
- provide guidelines for the development of countywide trails and greenways projects;
- update the existing Indiana County ordinance that create protective buffers around the County Parks;
- develop a plan for the voluntary protection of private properties surrounding the County Parks;
- identify opportunities to connect with regional trail systems that extend beyond County borders;
- plan for interpretive signs along trails;
- provide benches along trails;
- identify opportunities for equestrian trails;
- evaluate the possibility of a trail along the Conemaugh River;
- evaluate where undeveloped property abuts county parks and identify areas where acquisition of open land for open space buffers would be appropriate;
- ensure ease of access for trail users to the Hoodlebug and Ghost Town Trails; and

- clearly define Indiana County's role in the acquisition, development, and maintenance of future trail projects.

Indiana County Natural Areas Inventory (NAI)

Indiana County should conduct a Pennsylvania Natural Areas Inventory to gather information on unique natural resources, which will guide the designation of greenway corridors.

NAI is a partnership between the Bureau of Forestry, the Nature Conservancy, and the Western PA Conservancy to conduct inventories and to collect data to describe the Commonwealth's rare and most significant ecological features. These inventories include plant and animal species of special concern, rare and exemplary natural communities and outstanding geologic features. Site-specific information describing these features is stored in an integrated data management system created from map, manual, and computer files. The goal of NAI is to build, maintain, and provide accurate and accessible ecological information needed for conservation, development planning and natural resource management.

The County Inventory Program is an extension of the PNDI efforts. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Pennsylvania Science Office of The Nature Conservancy are working toward completing inventories for all of Pennsylvania's counties by 2006. The information collected through the inventory is used by county planners to help guide development away from environmentally sensitive areas, while economic development groups and developers can use the inventories to look ahead, anticipate potential conflicts and plan accordingly, saving time and money. The inventories can also help land trusts, park and greenway planners, and watershed associations select land to consider for nature preserves.

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
1	Conduct a county-wide Natural Areas Inventory	H	ICOPD	\$0	DCNR	
2	Complete a County Trails and Greenways Plan to identify county-wide trail connections and opportunities for open space conservation.	H	ICOPD and Indiana County	\$40,000	County and DCNR	
3	Finalize and approve the county's Bicycle Pedestrian Plan that was developed by the ICOPD.	H	ICOPD and County Commissioners	\$1,000	Indiana County	
4	Provide coordination assistance to local recreation and open space organizations in their efforts to implement county-wide trail and open space projects.	H	ICOPD and Indiana County	\$0	N/A	
5	In addition to trails for exercise and recreation, provide and promote trails as an alternative form of transportation (e.g. by linking key destination, providing trail heads).	M	Interagency Cooperation	unknown at this time	County and DCNR	
6	Pursue opportunities for the development or designation of bicycle lanes along roadways as they are constructed or repaired	M	Interagency Cooperation	\$0	N/A	

insert greenways map

MAINTAIN THE INDIANA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM

GOAL

Provide the resources necessary to maintain the Indiana County Parks and Trails system as the foundation of the county system, providing regional parks and recreation opportunities for persons of all ages, interests, and abilities.

Recommendations for the completion of master plans for County Parks are included in this plan. The list below represents desired park features identified through the public process for this Comprehensive Recreation Plan. Accommodation of these facilities within the County Parks should be considered as the park master plans are completed.

- camping;
- outdoor amphitheater;
- sledding area;
- rental cabins;
- skateboarding, rollerblading areas;
- downhill skiing and snowboarding areas;
- biking, hiking, walking, and jogging trails; and
- rifle/handgun ranges.

Proposed Administrative Plan For Indiana County Parks and Trails

Roles and Responsibilities of Local and County Agencies

County Commissioners

- Adopt the Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan as the basis for building a strong parks and recreation program within the County.
- Maintain ultimate responsibility for all County Park operations.
- Supervise the County Parks Department in providing and maintaining countywide parks and trails.
- Establish a reasonable budget for parks and trails.
- Provide for and fund a long-range capital plan for County Parks.
- Appoint the County Parks Advisory Board.
- Maintain the vision for parks and recreation that the County residents have established through this plan.

County Parks Department

- Report to the County Commissioners.
- Administer, manage and maintain all County Parks and related facilities.
- Promote County recreation facilities and parks.
- Provide a county park system adequate to meet the leisure needs of Indiana County's population.
- Maintain facilities and areas in a high level of excellence.
- Cooperate with other agencies throughout the County who will provide recreational programming in the County parks.
- Maintain reasonable fees for the use of all County Recreational facilities and services.
- Provide efficient modern recreational facilities that are well maintained.
- Ensure that every individual in Indiana County has access to the County Park facilities.
- Constantly seek funding for new Park facilities.
- Provide local agencies and organizations with implementation assistance for countywide trail and greenway projects.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

- Reports to the County Parks Director and the County Commissioners

The Board must focus on achieving the mission and vision set for parks and recreation in the County, as adopted by County Commissioners. Details of operating the parks and recreation programs remain the responsibility of the park staff. Once County Commissioners adopt this Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan, it shall become the County's vision for parks and recreation for the future.

The Board should:

1. Play a lead role in keeping the County's vision current and focused. However, it remains the role of County Commissioners to adopt such changes as they see fit.
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2. Serve in an advisory role to the County Parks Department and the County Commissioners. County Commissioners shall give specific rights and/or responsibilities in which the Board may not need to make recommendations back to County Commissioners.
 3. Review and comment on County-wide trail and greenway projects identified by local municipalities, agencies or organizations as to how they fit within the recommendations of the County Parks, trails and greenway plans.
 4. Be structured so that a variety of interests that are consistent with the County Parks philosophy are represented on the Board. It should geographically represent the County.
 5. Include a County Commissioner as a liaison.
 6. Advise County Commissioners on budgetary and policy matters that pertain to parks and recreation.
 7. Serve as a county advocate for parks and recreation.
 8. Monitor park facilities and make recommendations to County Commissioners for maintenance and/or improvements.
 9. Assist in the publicity of the County Parks.
 10. Review grant applications.
 11. Encourage community groups to fill program deficiencies in the County.

Indiana County Office of Planning and Development

Coordinate with local communities to support development of local parks and recreation opportunities. Provide communities with information on grant sources; facilitate DCNR grant workshops; review and where appropriate, provide letters of support for local recreation development projects. Provide technical assistance in grant writing.

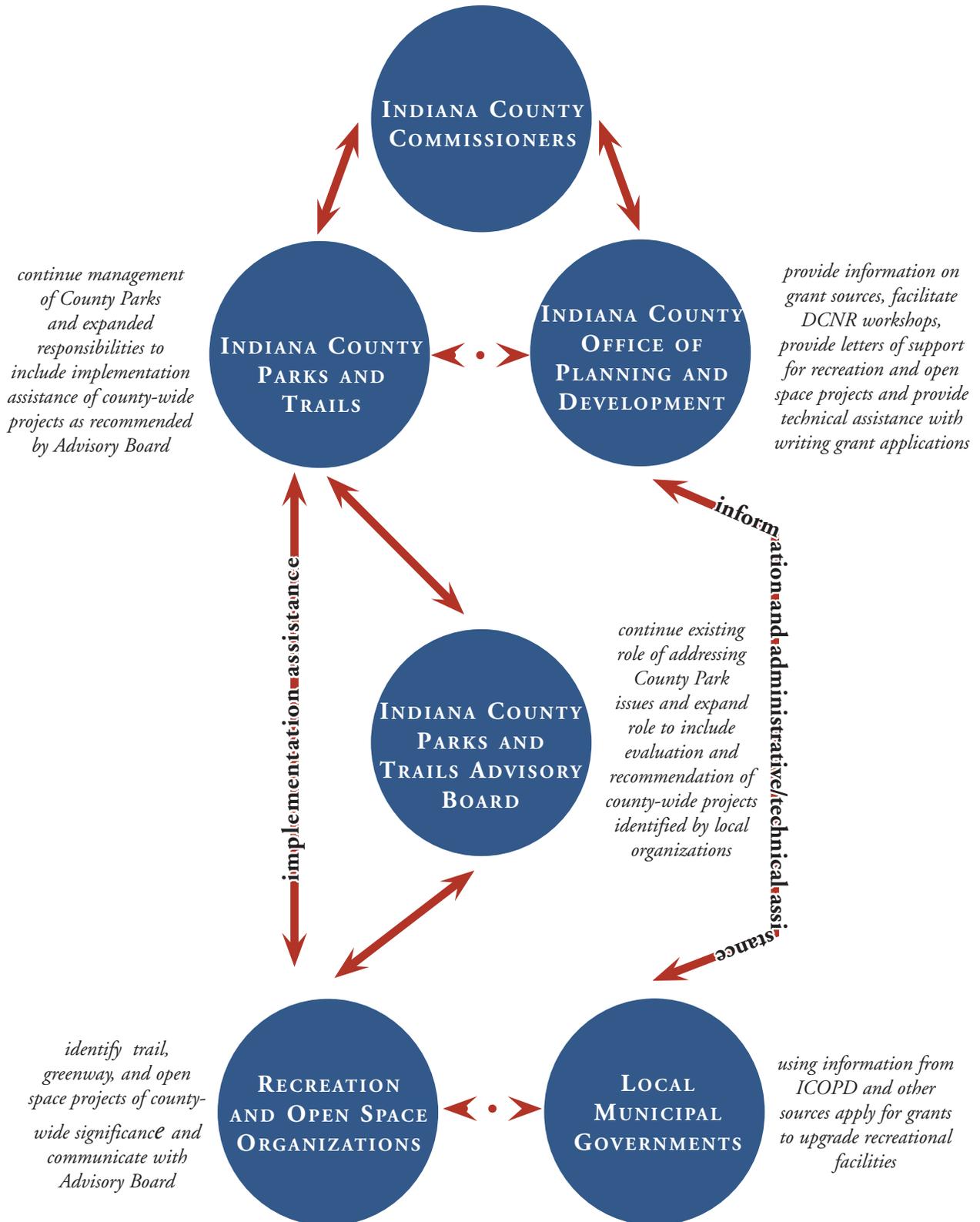
Local and Countywide recreation, trail and open space agencies and organizations

Identify trail, greenway and open space projects of countywide significance and communicate with the Indiana County Parks and Trails concerning these projects.

Local Municipal Governments

Work through the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development to receive educational and technical support for local recreation and park projects.

RECOMMENDED INDIANA COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
1	Continue to work with Friends of the Parks and other groups to provide environmental education programming in County Parks	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
2	Develop a Master Site Development Plan for Hemlock Lake Park to manage future development.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails		Indiana County and DCNR	
3	Increase Indiana County Parks and Trails budget to account for maintenance of the Hoodlebug and Ghost Town Trails.	H	County Commissioners		Indiana County	
4	Create a Trail Manager position (year-round) and a two-person seasonal crew within the ICP to manage, improve, and maintain County-owned trails.	H	County Commissioners	\$35,000	Indiana County	
5	County Parks Department to assure proper maintenance of all facilities	H	County Commissioners	\$40,000	Indiana County	
6	Upgrade the County Parks Department's Project Director's position to Assistant Parks Director. Responsibilities will include serving as liaison to the Parks Advisory Board for trail and greenway development, managing volunteers, fundraising, and project management and implementation.	H	County Commissioners	\$10,000	Indiana County	
7	Revise the Resolution that creates and gives authority to the Indiana County Parks and Trails Advisory Board to reflect current enabling legislation and the existing status of the Board.	H	County Commissioners	\$0	N/A	
8	Institute term limits for members of the Indiana County Parks and Trails Advisory Board.	H	County Commissioners	\$0	N/A	
9	Facilitate an annual meeting of all local trail, greenway, recreation, and open space organizations within the County to identify potential project and opportunities for collaboration	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails Advisory Board	\$500	Indiana County	

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
10	Improve security in all County Parks. Post emergency phone numbers and 911; update and enforce park rules; have the County Sheriff's Department conduct regular patrols in each park; request local and state law enforcement agencies to assist in enforcement; utilize security cameras where appropriate.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails and Indiana County Sheriff	\$30,000	Indiana County	
11	Develop a plan to address all issues with Americans with Disabilities Act within the County Parks	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	unknown at this time	N/A	
12	Develop and appropriately fund a capital improvement plan to address deferred maintenance and needed improvements in all County Parks. See the proposed capital budget on the following pages.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails and County Commissioners	see Capital Budget Proposal	Indiana County	
13	Develop and appropriately fund a capital plan to address maintenance equipment needs for the Parks.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails and County Commissioners	see Capital Budget Proposal	Indiana County	
14	Develop and implement a risk management plan for the Indiana County Parks and Trails. See the description on the following pages.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails and County Commissioners	\$0	N/A	
15	Provide an annual tour of the County Parks for the County Commissioners to keep them informed of issues related to County Parks.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
16	Review the recommendations in the Master Plan for the Ghost Town Trail and implement those that have yet to be completed, placing particular emphasis on increasing awareness of the trail.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails			
17	Develop a publicity campaign for the County parks. Promote the County Parks website; distribute park brochures; provide informational programs to service, social and business groups; place public service ads on local radio and television.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$3,000	Indiana County	

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
18	Develop a Master Site Development Plan for Blue Spruce Park to manage future development and/or acquisition. The cost could be reduced by as much as 30% by conducting the master site plans for Pine Ridge and Blue Spruce Parks together.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$40,000	Indiana County and DCNR	
19	Develop a Master Site Development Plan for Pine Ridge Park to manage future development and/or acquisition. The cost could be reduced by as much as 30% by conducting the master site plans for Pine Ridge and Blue Spruce Parks together.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$40,000	Indiana County and DCNR	
20	Design and install a standardized wayfinding system directing visitors to County-owned parks. Include directional signs within the parks as part of the same system.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$50,000	Indiana County and DCNR	
21	Develop a volunteer program to encourage assistance in the County Parks.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
22	Develop a means of better utilizing IUP students, faculty and staff to assist with a variety of projects in the parks.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
23	Encourage the local municipality to improve the road leading to Blue Spruce Park.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
24	Implement the Long Term Actions as recommended by the Blacklick Valley Natural Area Resource Management Plan and Inventory. In particular, begin interpretive and educational programming to enable visitors to understand and appreciate the natural features of the site and their relation to the Blacklick Creek Valley.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails			
25	Review the actions recommended by the Master Plan for the Eliza Furnace and implement the appropriate recommendations.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails			
26	Renew the lease between Indiana County and the PA Fish Commission for the operation of Hemlock Lake as a County Park. The current lease expires in 2012.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
27	Expand the role of the Indiana County Parks and Trails Advisory Board to serve as the clearinghouse of information from local recreation and open space organizations and to recommend county-wide recreation and open space projects.	I	County Commissioners	\$0	N/A	
28	Conduct an economic impact study of the County Parks.	I	County Commissioners	\$20,000	Indiana County	
29	Develop a timber management plan for the County Parks.	M	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$10,000	Indiana County	

The chart below compares functions of the Board that are inconsistent with enabling legislation.

Function	Current Status	What the Original County Resolution Says	What Pennsylvania Enabling Legislation Allows	Action Required
Role of the Commission/Board	Advisory Board	Policy and operating Commission	Advisory or Operating/Policy	Resolve whether the Commission/Board is to be an advisory board or a policy/operation Commission. If the Commission is to be an Advisory Board, other sections of the resolution will need to be amended to reflect the change in role.
Organization Name	Indiana County Parks and Trails Advisory Board	Parks and Recreation Commission of Indiana County	At the discretion of the County	Amend the resolution to reflect the proper name.
Membership on the Board	Seven to nine	Five	Minimum of 5 Maximum of nine	Amend the Resolution to allow between five and nine members.
Officers	No officers required	Chairperson required. Other officers as deemed necessary by the Committee	Chairperson and secretary required. Other officers as deemed necessary.	Amend the Resolution to require a Chair person and secretary and allow other officers as deemed necessary by the Commission/Board. The Commission/Board must elect the appropriate officers.

VARIETY OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL

Aggressively pursue a variety of funding opportunities for additions, improvements, and acquisitions to the County parks.

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
1	Seek ways to leverage local and grant monies with each other to make the best use of available grants.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
2	Seek out ways to use funding from the Greater Indiana Endowment.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
3	Seek out ways to use a portion of the County "Bed Tax" for tourism related activities of the County Parks Department.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$0	N/A	
4	Create a 501(c)3 park foundation through which persons can contribute to maintenance, development or acquisition of County parks.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails	\$1,500	Private Donations	

Indiana County Proposed Capital Improvements Plan

	Year 1 2004	Year 2 2005	Year 3 2006	Year 4 2007	Year 5 2008	Year 6 2009	Year 7 2010	Year 8 2011	Year 9 2012
Blacklick Valley Natural Area									
Pre-fab Uni-sex Restroom #							\$10,000		
Pavilion 20' X 28' Laminate beam shelter #							\$25,000		
Interpretive Trail with signage *							\$10,000		
Total									
Blue Spruce Park									
Cummings Dam repairs *					\$1,000,000				
Water Repairs								unknown	
Parking expansion								\$150,000	
Playground Safety Surface Replacement #	\$3,000								
Playground #1 Replacement						\$100,000			
Playground #2 Replacement				\$75,000					
Pavilion #1 repairs *			\$15,000						
New Comfort Station #				\$40,000					
Buttermilk Falls									
Accessible trail to falls							\$25,000		
Pre-fab Uni-sex Restroom #									\$10,000
Pavilion 20' X 28' Laminate beam shelter #									\$25,000
Eliza Furnace									
Interpretive signage *	\$10,000								
Ghost Town Trail									
Pre-fab Uni-sex Restroom #						\$10,000			
Pavilion 20' X 28' Laminate beam shelter #						\$25,000			
Bridge rehab at Dilltown *#					\$4,500				
Blairsville Secondary Trail Extension *	\$360,000								
Hemlock Lake									
Road Rehabilitation *		\$20,000							
Pedestrian bridge construction *#							\$10,000		
Hoodlebug Trail									
Construct missing links-FMC and Martini *	\$60,000								
Pre-fab Uni-sex Restroom (2) #	\$20,000								
Memorial Park									
Sidewalk repairs *			\$11,500						
Landscaping, lighting and tree work *			\$12,500						
Pine Ridge Park									
Playground #1 Replacement (Tom's Run)		\$75,000							
Playground #2 Replacement (Tom's Run)		\$100,000							
Playground #3 Replacement (Pine Lodge)			\$100,000						
Pine Lodge Playground Safety Surfacing	\$3,000								
Pine Lodge Road resurfacing *				\$40,000					
Tom's Run Road Sealing *				\$10,000					
Water storage tank for maintenance *			\$3,000						
Tunnelview Historic Site									
Restroom and sidewalk improvements *								\$2,000	
Total for each year	\$456,000	\$195,000	\$142,000	\$165,000	\$1,004,500	\$135,000	\$80,000	\$152,000	\$35,000
GRAND TOTAL									\$1,908,500

*pricing taken from Indiana County Parks and Trails Major Maintenance/Capital Improvements Project List

#plus installation

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATIONAL AND NATURE BASED TOURISM

GOAL

Capitalize on opportunities for recreational and nature based tourism.

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
1	Encourage visitors to come to Indiana County to enjoy its trails by implementing a regional marketing effort with the County.	H	Interagency Cooperation	\$3,000	Indiana County	
2	Develop scenic driving tours throughout the County.	I	Interagency Cooperation	\$0	N/A	
3	Capitalize on the local history of Indiana County, its sites and events to draw visitors from outside the County.	I	Interagency Cooperation	\$0	N/A	

ACTIVE, HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

GOAL

Promote active healthy lifestyles for all Indiana County residents.

	recommendation	priority	agency	cost estimate	funding source	record of action
1	Indiana County, as well as local municipalities should become Keystone Activity Zone Partners and implement appropriate programming and initiatives to encourage active, healthy lifestyles.	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails and local municipalities	\$3,000	Indiana County Parks and Trails, local municipalities, KAZ	
2	Utilize the Keystone Activity Zone Passport to encourage elementary students visit County parks and trails during the summer months	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails and local municipalities	Unknown	N/A	
3	Partner with the PA Department of Health to implement appropriate components of the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP).	H	Indiana County Parks and Trails and local municipalities	\$0	N/A	

Keystone Activity Zone (KAZ)

The Keystone Active Zone (KAZ) Campaign is a fun-filled promotion designed to make Pennsylvanians aware of the many municipal, county, and state parks and trails available to help them get - and stay - active.

A program of PANA (Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity) in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society, the KAZ Campaign gives counties the tools to promote awareness of close-to-home parks and trails, and encourages increased physical activity to help residents lead healthier lifestyles.

In 2004, PANA recruited two pilot sites to test the implementation of the Keystone Active Zone campaign in 2005. The two counties chosen were Allegheny, an urban/suburban county; and Franklin, a more rural county. Each county has provided a unique model for implementation with barriers and strategies customized for their partnership and county assets.

Franklin County

The Franklin County partnership has been working together for several years under the leadership of the Franklin County Healthy Communities Partnership. Because the obesity epidemic has directly affected Franklin County, this has become a priority of the partnership. After developing the timeline and goals for the campaign, the partnership planned The Media Kick-off in May at the Chambersburg Municipal Park. The event brought together kids from the local elementary school and members of local AARP chapters, while highlighting park amenities and publicizing the website, the map, and the passport. Local media was present to take pictures and conduct interviews. In addition to the intergenerational celebration at the park, AARP sponsored a bus trip for its members to visit an additional two parks so they could become familiar with other places to be physically active. This event was titled

“Walk the Talk in the Park.” The KAZ passport was distributed to school age children targeted in four of the Keystone Healthy Zone (KHZ) Elementary schools in Franklin County for use with their families. A passport program also is being developed with AARP groups and senior center attendees, and will be implemented along with the KAZ campaign. Incentives for AARP chapter participation will be tied to the schools participating in the passport program so that AARP can contribute to the physical education programs at local schools. AARP members may also begin to work with local schools on other projects such as the walking school bus program as relationships develop. Both the young kids and the older kids enjoyed their day together and asked for additional opportunities to spend time together!

Pennsylvania State Health Improvement Plan

In July 2001, the Department of Health issued the State Health Improvement Plan - SHIP 2001-2005. It is to serve as a model for health planning in Pennsylvania. SHIP emphasizes the prevention of disease and disability, the coordination of resources, interagency collaboration, and improved government responsiveness to community health planning priorities. The State Health Improvement Plan's goals are as follows:

- To increase community empowerment by providing meaningful opportunity for community planning based on local needs;
- To link community-based health plans with the allocation of Commonwealth resources to the degree possible;
- To establish partnerships among local government, state, and local partners committed to sharing the risk, responsibility, and resources to foster the coordination of health resources along the spectrum of prevention, acute care, and long-term care; and
- To shift the mode of community health planning from a prescriptive model to a shared responsibility model.

