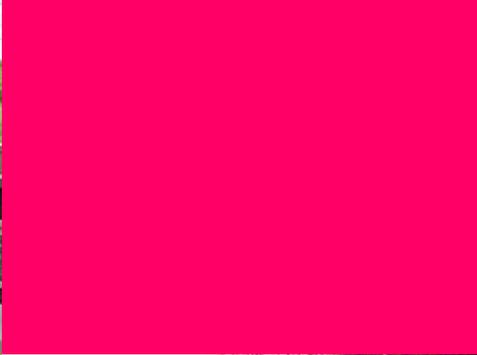




Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission





Parks Commission Mission Statement

The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission enhances quality of life for residents and visitors, by preserving parks and open spaces and providing natural resource-based recreation and education opportunities.

2012 Commission Members

- Bobbi Jones Sabine, President
- David VanGinhoven, Vice President
- Philip D. Kuyers, Secretary
- Paul Geerlings
- James Holtvluger

- Roger Jonas
- Jim Miedema
- Ray Statema
- David Vander Kooi
- Tom Werkman

Executive Summary

The year 2012 was one of progress for the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission as it continued its efforts to expand and improve the county's system of parks and open spaces. It was a special year for the Commission as it celebrated its 25th anniversary since it was established by the Board of Commissioners in 1987. The Parks Commission's key source of funding is the county-wide parks millage, and 2012 was the fifth budget year of the ten-year millage program as renewed by voters in 2006. At the end of 2012, the Ottawa County Parks and Open Space system included 26 county parks and 13 open space lands totaling 6,349 acres.

Park maintenance and operations staff continued to meet the challenge of providing high maintenance standards in the growing park system. Park use increased throughout the park system, with particularly high use at Lake Michigan beaches as a result of excellent summer weather. Trail use continues to expand with over 70 miles of multi-use trails found in the park system. Expanding land stewardship responsibilities provide challenges with growing invasive species threats and new habitat restoration commitments. Key land stewardship accomplishments in 2012 included thinning red pine plantations at Riley Trails and initiating a deer management program at North Ottawa Dunes. A major focus on expansion of the Ottawa County Parks volunteer program was successful in providing manpower to assist with labor intensive stewardship activities.

The Parks Commission's interpretive programs' popularity continued in 2012 with 146 programs offered, including general nature walks, birding trips, butterfly-watching workshops, cross-country ski clinics, and many others. The base of operations for interpretive programs and staff is the Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing. This beautiful facility, which had its first full season of operation in 2011, also serves as a visitor center for the entire county park system.

In 2012 the Parks Commission continued its focus on the establishment of greenways along key river corridors and the Lake Michigan coast. Although only six acres were acquired to expand the land base, a great deal of planning work was completed to set the stage for future purchases. In addition, a number of important greenway improvement projects were completed including the Connor Bayou Park project, Macatawa Greenspace restoration and park improvements, Pigeon Creek Lodge expansion, and many others described herein.

Introduction

The 2012 Annual Report of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission was developed to provide a brief summary of Commission activities for the 2012 calendar year to the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners as called for in the Board Rules. Additional information regarding all aspects of Parks Commission activities is available by contacting the County Parks Office.

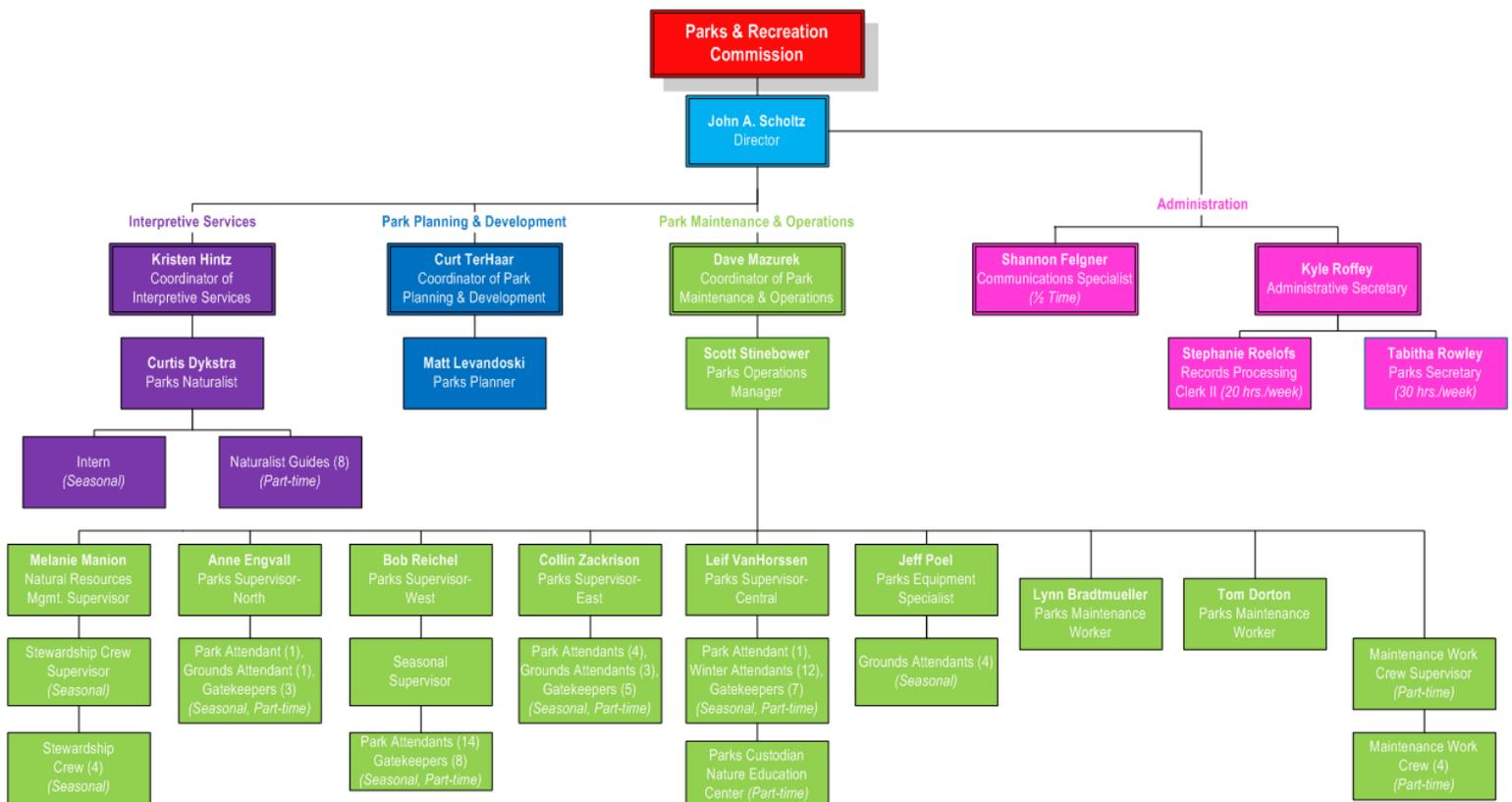
Organizational Summary

The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission oversees acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of twenty-six (26) county parks, several undeveloped park properties and 13 open space lands totaling 6,349 acres (see Attachment A for a listing of all lands administered by the Parks Commission as of December 31, 2012). In addition, the Commission oversees management of the Musketawa Trail under an agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The Commission's staff during 2012 consisted of 16 full-time positions including the Parks and Recreation Director, Coordinator of Park Maintenance and Operations, Parks Operations Manager, four Park Supervisors, Natural Resources Management Supervisor, Equipment Specialist, Park Maintenance Worker, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development, Park Planner, Coordinator of Interpretive Services, Park Naturalist, and Administrative Secretary. The Parks Commission also employs two permanent part-time clerical positions and approximately 80 seasonal and part-time staff including Park Attendants, Grounds Attendants, an intern, and part-time Gatekeepers for eleven of the parks.

The year 2012 marked the 25th anniversary of the Parks Commission which was formed in 1987. The Parks Commission wrote a series of articles and press releases detailing the history of the parks program in Ottawa County. The Commission also celebrated its accomplishments with anniversary activities at a Connor Bayou event held in August in conjunction with the Grand River Greenway Celebration.

2013 Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission Organizational Chart



Maintenance and Operations

Every year there are factors which have a significant effect on park maintenance and operations. In 2012 park maintenance and operations were most affected by:

- The addition of new facilities including Olive Shores, Connor Bayou, and Eastmanville Bayou Open Space.
- The weather: a mild winter, a warm spring and a hot dry summer contributed to an overall robust year in terms of park use.
- Providing support for a series of special events held monthly in 2012 to highlight and celebrate the Grand River Greenway.
- The implementation and establishment of a formal volunteer program.
- The implementation of several significant stewardship activities.

Park Use Summary

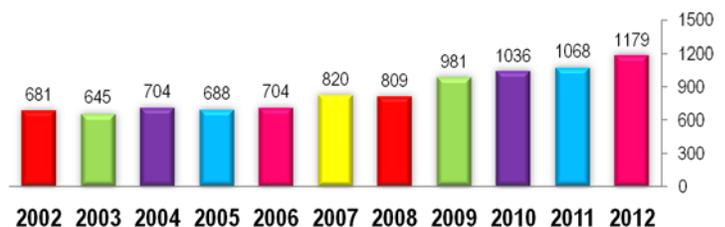
Winter operations in 2012 were slower than normal as January and February were relatively mild and the significant snow cover needed for skiing and sledding was lacking. The weather then turned unusually warm early in March with more than half the days in March over 70 degrees and several days in the 80's. The rest of the spring was mild, and then the summer was hot and dry – very good beach weather leading to exceptionally high visitation at the six Lake Michigan beach parks. The use at parks with trails also continued to be strong, as was use at parks with picnic areas and buildings available for reservation. Overall park use continued to increase.

Revenues

Due to the mild winter weather, revenues from winter operations, ski rental and concessions at Pigeon Creek were down in 2012. Only a little over \$17,000 was generated compared to over \$49,000 in 2011.

Conversely, the summer weather in 2012 helped achieve very high revenues from motor vehicle permit sales at the Lake Michigan beach parks. Revenue collection set a new record and topped \$300,000 for the first time. A total of \$308,351 was collected from the sale of vehicle parking permits.

Reservation site revenues topped *ninety thousand dollars* (\$90,949) in 2012 and again this was a new high. There were 21 facilities available for reservation in the park system, and more than 1,100 reservations were processed during the year. The table to the right shows the growth in this area over the last 10 years.



Field Staff Focus in 2012

Alongside increased activity and responsibility during the year for routine maintenance and operations, field staff put special effort into the following areas:

- Construction and installation of more than 200 interpretive, informational and regulatory signs at various sites. This included both new and replacement signs.
- Extensive improvements to the Eastmanville Farm equestrian trail system.
- Planning and implementation of improvements for winter operations at Pigeon Creek including an addition to the Pigeon Lodge, additions to rental offerings, additional amenities, and updated signage.

Maintenance and Operations, continued

- Installation of new playground equipment and other play area improvements at Tunnel Park.
- Establishment of a new recycling program at 11 parks for glass, plastic and paper - which included construction of special recycling containers and development of special operations for proper disposal of recyclables.



Natural Resource Management

Significant activity took place in the area of natural resource management:

- A major effort was made to locate and map all invasive plants (including phragmites along the Grand River) on OCPRC properties. All stands of phragmites on the Grand and Pigeon Rivers have been treated. Parks staff and volunteers continue to find new populations and will manage new and existing stands. Native seeds have also been planted to restore the treated areas.
- Work continued on high priority species (garlic mustard, spotted knapweed, etc.) and high priority sites (Rosy Mound, North Ottawa Dunes, etc.) with the Stewardship Crew. Staff and volunteers were utilized to increase survey efforts in order to constantly adapt our strategy of managing invasives.
- Partnerships with the Ottawa County Invasive Phragmites Group and the Stewardship Network allowed us to cooperatively plan for and manage invasive species both at a county level and also in connection with regional, state, and national land management efforts.
- Red Pine management at Riley Trails was carefully planned and a thinning was completed late in the year. Clean-up and implementation of a restoration plan will take place in 2013.
- Two new hunting opportunities were provided: water fowl hunting was offered for the first time at Grand River Open Space, and new opportunities for deer hunting were available at North Ottawa Dunes by special permit as part of efforts to manage the deer population.

Alternative Labor

Alternative labor (mainly community service workers, volunteers, and inmate labor) has been an important part of the OCPRC maintenance and operations plan since the department was established in 1990.

For many years, the idea of expanding use of volunteers has been a goal of the Parks Commission. In 2011, a plan by staff to develop a formal volunteer program was formulated and approved by the Parks Commission. In 2012, the plan was



fully implemented with great success. There are four objectives of the plan: recruiting volunteers, retaining volunteers, developing support for OCPRC through the Volunteer Program and ensuring the high value of the program.

Evaluation of the program at year's end showed more than 10,000 hours of volunteer time was donated to OCPRC in 2012 (this compares to 4500 hours in 2011). In addition to the work accomplished during these hours of service, a focus on an 'intrinsic' value (volunteers feeling to be a part of 'the team') has also been recognized as an important benefit of this program.

Maintenance and Operations, continued

Part of the effort of volunteers in 2012 included a special committee of accomplished local leaders and very special volunteers – the Grand River Greenway Celebration Committee (GRGC). The GRGC planned and offered 12 special events (one per month) throughout the year, provided an extensive speaker series covering a wide range of Grand River related topics at the Loutit Library in Grand Haven, and developed an interpretive driving trail along the Grand River focusing on history – all to celebrate and highlight the Grand River and surrounding Greenway for its recreational potential. This was a very special volunteer effort.



Outside of the GRGC volunteers, the greatest number of volunteer hours was accrued in the maintenance and operations of our properties, with almost 3,000 hours contributed by volunteers picking up trash, monitoring our parks, building trails, and other related activities. Over 2,000 hours were donated to the stewardship of our properties through the Adopt-A-Park Program (11 parks adopted by the end of 2012), public workdays, the wild rice/phragmites project, and other natural-resource based projects. Also, Friends of Ottawa County Parks' outreach efforts, Eagle Scout projects, and student internships significantly contributed to exceeding our 2012 goals.

Cost Analysis for Volunteer Program 2012

Costs	
Half of Natural Resources Management Supervisor's salary and benefits	\$32,227.00
Stewardship Outreach Assistant Position	\$4,192.04
Materials and Supplies	\$1,987.00
Total	\$38,406.04
Benefits	
Volunteer Hours w/out GRGC	6,936
GRGC hours	3,512
Total	10,448
<i>Volunteer Contribution (excluding Grand River Greenway Celebration Volunteers)</i>	
OCPRC analysis	\$90,506.48
Using Federal Rate (\$17.90)	\$123,153.00
<i>Grand River Greenway Celebration Contribution</i>	
OCPRC analysis of GRGC contribution	\$140,500.00
Using Federal Rate	\$62,864.00
<i>Grand Total of Volunteer Contribution for 2012</i>	
OCPRC analysis	\$231,006.48
Using Federal Rate	\$187,019.20
Costs/Benefits Analysis (w/o GRGC)*	
Cost/benefit w/o GRGC using OCPRC analysis	\$2.40 return for every dollar invested
Cost/benefit Federal w/o GRGC using Federal Rate	\$3.20 return for every dollar invested

*Not based on Grand Total of Volunteer Contribution because staff time invested in GRGC was difficult to accurately calculate.

Interpretive Programs and Educational Activities

The Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center at Hemlock Crossing serves as an information center for the entire Ottawa County parks system. It also serves as an educational and recreational facility for residents and visitors throughout the seasons. This was the second full year of operation at the Nature Education Center (NEC), and much was accomplished in the past year. Looking ahead reveals how interpretive programming and services can be expanded in future years.



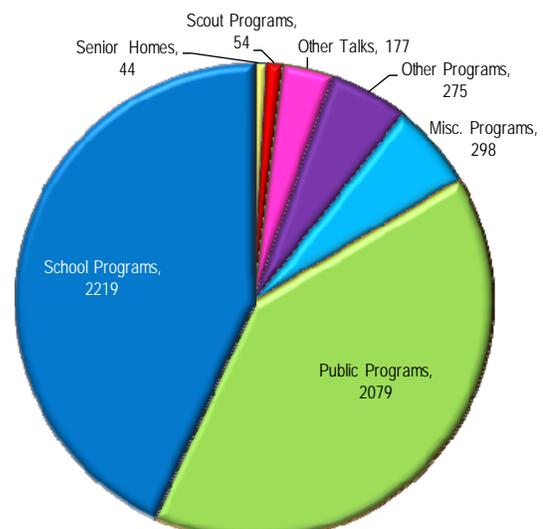
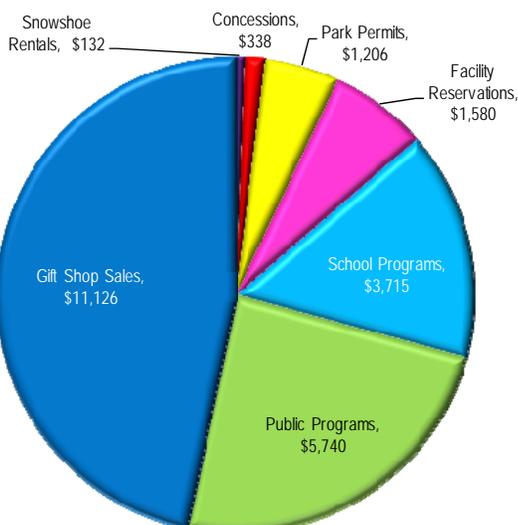
County Parks interpretive staff at the NEC consists of two full-time Parks Naturalists, eight part-time Naturalist Guides, one Summer College Intern and one part-time Custodian. There were many changes in 2012, the most significant of which was the departure of Chip Francke, the Coordinator of Interpretive Services, who retired after 12+ years in the Parks Department. Kristen Hintz, previously the Park Naturalist, stepped into Francke's job and accepted the responsibility for overseeing the interpretive program. In addition to paid staff, the NEC has six volunteer naturalist guides who also lead school programs and cover the front desk when needed.

Over the year, responsibilities of the interpretive staff expanded as more people discovered the Nature Education Center and learned about the variety of interpretive programs and educational activities offered. The responsibilities of NEC staff include greeting visitors, teaching school programs, assisting with the development and maintenance of bulletin boards and activity drawers in the wildlife den, scheduling public programs, setting up and taking down tables and chairs for groups renting the facility, handling gift shop transactions, and much more. After a full season of teaching school programs, part-time naturalist guides took on the task of developing and presenting family programs every Sunday afternoon. These weekly program were successful in 2012 and will continue in 2013.



Visitation to the NEC in 2012 included a total of 8,460 "walk-ins" plus 2,079 who attended the 146 public interpretive programs held throughout the park system. Part-time naturalist guides taught 43 school programs, reaching an additional 2,219 students, teachers and chaperons. There were a variety of other scheduled programs for nature groups, residents in assisted living facilities, and scout groups.

2012 Nature Education Center Revenue and Program Attendance



Interpretive Programs and Educational Activities, continued

The NEC offers year-round school programs which provide unique outdoor learning experiences for any grade level. Programs are designed to meet the Michigan Department of Education's Grade Level Content Expectations for the Inquiry Process. These seasonal programs complement, enhance, and expand upon the concepts that children learn in the classroom. The NEC's experienced interpretive staff uses a variety of techniques to encourage students to ask questions, observe closely, and construct reasonable explanations based on their observations. The NEC is the perfect place for students to develop their knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the natural world through direct and positive outdoor experiences.



There has been a steady increase in the number of participants in nature education programs. A key goal over the next three years is to build public participation in Ottawa County Parks Interpretive Services. Plans to achieve this include upgrading the Nature Education Center exhibits to draw return visitors, offering more programs at a variety of parks, providing more summer camp opportunities for children, increasing the number of family programs offered on Sundays, and establishing a high profile winter speaker series.

Skull Detectives Program

Skull Detectives is a new program for third grade and older students funded by a grant from "Including Our Neighbors". This two-hour indoor program is offered year-round for a maximum of 30 students and is designed to meet the needs of children of all abilities. The program correlates with the Battle Creek Science Curriculum, "Organisms Have Character."



Students are introduced to vertebrates and invertebrates as well as the five major groups of vertebrates using skeletons and pictures. Students then work in small groups to observe, compare, and identify the skulls of ten common Michigan mammals using an identification key. After identifying the skulls, a naturalist will facilitate closer observation of skulls to explore predator-prey relationships and adaptations of the mammals.



Other Nature Education Center Projects and Information

In 2011, staff from KANDU brought adults with disabilities to walk the trails at Hemlock Crossing and visit the Nature Center. Last year, KANDU staff asked if they could bring a group to volunteer at the Nature Education Center for two hours each Wednesday. Throughout the spring, summer, and fall months, KANDU brought and supervised eight adults with disabilities to help with a variety of jobs, such as collecting animals to display at the desk, cleaning the bird feeding area, washing windows, picking spotted knapweed, and cleaning the veranda.



Parks Information and Public Relations

Public Relations Strategy

Given the importance of communications and public relations to the success of the parks program and recognizing the evolving nature of communications in the digital era, the Parks and Recreation Commission hired a public relations consultant in 2012 to assess its public relations practices and recommend a strategy to address identified needs. Boileau Communications from Holland was hired in 2012 and worked closely with the Commission's Public Relations Committee to develop a public relations strategy that calls for greater use of social media and major updates to the website, as well as many other recommended new and updated public relations practices.

To assist the Commission with the new public relations work, the consultant strongly recommended adding staff with the needed expertise to oversee this critical area. While the department's naturalist staff has done an outstanding job over the years, the time had come for dedicated staff to oversee this function. After considering this need, the Parks Commission and County Administrator developed a plan to share a Communications Manager in 2013 to begin to address the identified needs.

Newsletter

Outdoors Ottawa County is the quarterly newsletter of the Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission. The newsletter was mailed to over 5,400 households per quarter as well as distributed to libraries and other locations. Another 1,900 individuals signed up to view the newsletter online via an email notice sent by parks staff. The newsletter provides current information on park projects and includes the seasonal schedule of interpretive programs and Friends of Ottawa County Parks events. The goal is to encourage more people to select the email option to save on future printing costs. A group of volunteers assists in preparing the newsletters for mailing. A weekly NaturE-mail is sent to alert park enthusiasts to upcoming programs and activities in the park system. The NaturE-mail list now stands at over 1,400 people.



Parks Brochure

The Ottawa County Parks brochure is the main public relations piece for parks and provides a map and information on all parks and open space lands in the county park system. More than 16,000 brochures were distributed in 2012 through the Parks Office, Nature Education Center, local government offices, area visitor bureaus and other outlets.

Website

Continual improvements and updates were made to the parks website (a section within the Ottawa County website, miOttawa.org) in 2012. The Parks Commission's goal is to make the website the best source for up-to-date information on parks, park projects, programs, recreational opportunities, and park facility reservations.



Social Networking

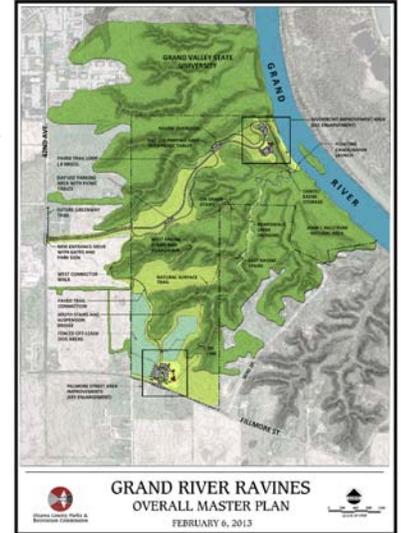
Parks naturalists took the lead in developing a Facebook page for the parks in accordance with the Ottawa County Social Media Policy. At the end of 2012, the site had over 800 "friends".

Planning, Acquisition and Development

Park Planning

Planning efforts to efficiently develop and manage existing park and open space properties were initiated at several sites, including the following:

- **Grand River Ravines Master Planning** – Park staff completed the majority of the planning, design, and public input portions of the master planning process for this 187-acre site located on the Grand River just south of Grand Valley State University. Proposed improvements include new drives and parking, renovations to the existing house, an extensive paved and natural surface trail system, stairs and boardwalks traversing the steep ravines, a dog park, and a zip line.
- **Pine Bend Garden Area** – A concept plan was developed for the area around the Weaver House at Pine Bend to better facilitate weddings and other outdoor events. Proposed improvements include renovation of an historic cottage, construction of a ceremonial platform, a trellis, landscaping, and irrigation.
- **DeVries/Vanderlaan Room Landscape** – Plans were prepared for new irrigation and landscaping to be installed by park staff and volunteers.
- **Upper Macatawa Natural Area Master Plan Update** – This master plan was updated to include development of mountain bike trails and other minor changes in relation to the UMNA Greenway Path.
- **Grand River Greenway Planning** – Extensive work started to determine options and costs for property acquisitions and trail construction along the south side of the Grand River. Promotional materials were also developed to explain the project to potential public and private funders.
- **Upper Macatawa Natural Area Greenway Path** – Detailed design began for two miles of paved trail through the Upper Macatawa Natural Area after a conditional commitment of grant funds through the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- **Ottawa Beach Walkway Design Development** – Following award of a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, detailed design and engineering began to this waterfront project which will connect the previously completed Black Lake Boardwalk parking area and the Holland Harbor Fishing Access.



Land Acquisition

Following several above average years in acreage acquisition to expand the park system (303 acres in 2010 and 294 acres in 2011), the Parks Commission added only six acres in 2012. The six-acre acquisition was property with Grand River frontage in eastern Georgetown Township. The property was acquired for both its conservation value and as a likely location for a future greenway trail.

Total acreage of the park system was 6,349 at the end of 2012. Although land acquisition efforts will begin to wind down in the coming years, there are still key acquisition properties the Commission is targeting along the greenway corridors, particularly along the Grand River. The Parks Commission's approximate goal for land acquisition for the current ten-year millage is 1,800 and 1,078 acres have been acquired to date at the half-way mark.

Park Developments and Improvements

- **Ottawa Beach (Park 12) Walkway Repairs** – Another significant section of badly deteriorated concrete walkway was removed and replaced. This was the fourth phase of walkway improvements completed to date. An additional improvement project is scheduled for 2013.

Planning, Acquisition and Development, continued

- **Musketawa Trail Extension** – Construction of the alternate trail route connecting the existing trailhead in Marne to the Kent County line was completed, including about two miles of paved path and a section of raised boardwalk. Ottawa County Parks assisted with this project which was spearheaded by Kent County Parks.
- **Macatawa Open Space (former Holland Country Club) Restoration** – Earthwork to create 30 acres of new wetland area was completed, including reconstruction and stabilization of over 4,000 linear feet of riverbank. All disturbed areas were seeded or re-vegetated with native plants to create new habitat and filter flood waters to improve water quality.
- **Macatawa Open Space (Holland Country Club) Recreation Facilities** – In conjunction with the wetland restoration project, public access facilities including a new entrance drive, parking area, and a new system of paved and natural surface trails traversing the restored areas were constructed. Other parts of the project include a relocated pedestrian bridge and disc golf course. The official opening is scheduled for June 2013.
- **Pigeon Lodge Expansion** – To better meet high demand during the winter snow sport season, the Pigeon Creek Lodge was renovated to provide additional space for ski rental and concession operations. New kiosk/trailhead signage was also installed as part of the project.
- **Grand River Park Boat Launch** – The existing parking area for this launch was renovated, including reconfiguration of the parking areas and circulation routes, removal of an old dock along the Grand River, and paving of the access drive from the main entrance to the launch area.
- **Bur Oak Landing Trails** – A small system of new trails was constructed utilizing volunteer labor on the western end of this open space property. Accessed from a small parking area and trail head off Oriole Drive, the new trails provide opportunities to experience a nice section of upland forest with views to the Grand River flood plain below.
- **Tunnel Park Play Area Renovation** – Originally built in the early 1990's, the Tunnel Park playground was renovated and expanded to include new modern play equipment, replacing several worn and outdated pieces.
- **Grand River Open Space Access Improvements** – A new entrance drive, parking area, rustic toilet, and kiosk were added to this newly acquired site to provide better public amenities for hunters and other park users.
- **Olive Shores** – This 20-acre lakeshore park was completed in the spring of 2013. Improvements included a new parking area, modern restrooms, and an extensive boardwalk and wood stairs system that provides access over a large dune and to the Lake Michigan beach. Other amenities include picnic tables, a barrier-free walk loop, and interpretation of the site as a filming location of the Tom Hanks movie, *Road to Perdition*.



Planning, Acquisition and Development, continued

- **Croswell/Hemlock Crossing Connector Path** – This project was undertaken by Port Sheldon Township with the primary purpose of connecting the existing trail along Croswell Street with the Hemlock Crossing park entrance. Park staff coordinated with the township's engineer to locate the trail and connect it to internal park walkways.
- **Eastmanville Farm Equestrian Trail Expansion** – Significant earthwork was undertaken to shape slopes as required to create new trails traversing the small ravines on this site. Approximately one mile of new trail was created.
- **Eastmanville Farm Memory Grove** – Highlighting the long and interesting history of the Ottawa County Poor Farm which occupied this site for over 100 years, this project included construction of a small plaza with interpretive signs placed in a grove of mature trees near the park entrance.
- **Connor Bayou** – Construction was substantially completed to add visitor amenities to this beautiful but undeveloped site. Improvements included new parking, walkways, boardwalks, and trails, plus renovations to the existing log home to make it suitable for daily rentals.



2013 Parks Commission Goals

- **Integrate New Operational Commitments While Continuing High Quality Park Operations:** With its strong commitment to high quality maintenance, the Parks Commission will continue its focus on balancing operational capability with growth of the park system.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Continue emphasis on reducing costs, exploring new revenue sources, and operating in the most cost-effective manner possible to best utilize property tax revenues. Utilize new county financial system to improve cost-accounting information to better identify the cost of individual parks, programs, and facilities to allow for improved decision-making both short-term and long-range.
- **Diversified Funding Strategy:** Continue the focus on maintaining a diversified long-range funding strategy for the county park system as identified in the *2011 Parks Plan*, with continued focus on expanding donations from the private sector and identifying new sources of public grant support. Explore the potential to establish a Parks Foundation as a focal point for fund-raising efforts.
- **Volunteer Program:** Build off of success in 2012 to expand the volunteer program to assist in both park stewardship activities and park maintenance functions.
- **Public Relations:** Implement recommendations of the public relations strategic plan developed in 2012 with focus on improving the website and use of social media with assistance from a half-time communications specialist. Evaluate the need for a full-time communications position beginning in 2014.

2013 Parks Commission Goals, continued

- **Interpretive Programs and Nature Education Center:** Continue to improve operations and programming at the Nature Education Center and expand programs for school and other youth groups. Continue soliciting donations for the Nature Education Center Endowment Fund.
- **Friends Group:** Continue close coordination and collaboration with Friends of Ottawa County Parks, which serves as a support group for Ottawa County park system.
- **Stewardship Activities:** Continue efforts to provide a high level of land stewardship through control of invasive species, development of land management and stewardship plans, and restoration of degraded sites. Continue managed deer hunt at North Ottawa Dunes with a goal to protect native vegetation and the ecological health of park property.
- **Accessibility:** Continue to make modifications to parks and facilities to remove barriers and achieve universal accessibility to the greatest extent possible throughout the park system. Add two universally accessible kayak launches within Grand River Greenway (see Grand River Greenway below).
- **Open Space Lands:** Continue progress made in 2012 to improve public awareness and access to Open Space lands. Construct and mark additional trails at selected open space lands to facilitate expanded public use.
- **Grand River Greenway:** The Parks Commission will continue its work toward a more detailed greenway master plan and work to build public and local government support for the greenway initiative. The Commission will expand public access to recently acquired greenway properties, including trails at Bur Oak Landing, Grand River Open Space, and other open space properties. Additional steps will be taken to enhance the recently developed Grand River Heritage Water Trail. Efforts will continue to monitor and acquire target properties in the river corridor, seeking grant support as needed.
 - **Connor Bayou Project:** Complete final elements of the large park improvement project at Connor Bayou and promote for public use.
 - **Eastmanville Farm:** Continue work to improve public access for equestrians and hikers with additional trail improvements in 2013. Continue efforts to collaborate with the agricultural community to develop a farm park at Eastmanville Farm.
 - **Bend Area Site:** Continue to work with the mining companies and other landowners to implement the Bend Area Master Plan, with a long-range goal of expanding opportunities for swimming and other water-based activities in eastern Ottawa County.
 - **Grand River Ravines:** Complete master plan for the Grand River Ravines property and seek funding assistance for first phase improvements through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.
- **Macatawa River Greenway:** Continue to monitor the availability of key lands in the river corridor for potential acquisition, and promote use of existing parks. Continue work with greenway partners to expand and improve the greenway system.
 - **Macatawa Greenspace:** Complete habitat restoration work and park improvements with a goal to open the new park in early summer of 2013.
 - **Macatawa Greenway Trail:** With grant assistance from the Michigan Department of Transportation, develop over two miles of paved greenway trail through the Upper Macatawa Natural Area linking the Fred Meijer Kenowa Trail to the bike path on Adams Street.
- **Pigeon River Greenway:** Continue to monitor the availability of key lands in the river corridor for potential acquisition, and promote use of existing parks.
 - **Weaver House Gardens at Pine Bend:** Improve the grounds of the Weaver House to accommodate group functions including weddings and other events.
- **Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway:** Continue to monitor the availability of key lands in the coastal corridor for potential acquisition, and promote use of existing parks with particular attention to Olive Shores, a new park facility opened in 2012.
 - **Historic Ottawa Beach Parks:** Construct the final segment of the waterfront walkway at the Historic Ottawa Beach Parks with assistance provided by a \$300,000 grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Continue working with the Historic Ottawa Beach Society toward the goal of establishing a museum in the historic pumphouse.

Appendix A

Ottawa County Parks and Open Spaces Acreage and Water Frontage

As of December 31, 2012

Parks and Open Spaces	Acreage	Lake Michigan Frontage (feet)	Grand, Pigeon & Macatawa River Frontage (feet)	Bayou & Inland Lake Frontage (feet)
Grand River Greenway				
Connor Bayou	142	0	4,563	1,687
Crockery Creek Natural Area	334	0	2,640	0
Jubb Bayou (Open Space)	97	0	4,589	4,026
Riverside Park	95	0	6,737	0
Bur Oak Landing (Open Space)	261	0	7,392	5,267
Eastmanville Farm	229	0	1,365	0
Eastmanville Bayou Open Space	157	0	9,364	8,300
Deer Creek Park	2	0	530	0
Ripps Bayou (Open Space)	173	0	7,550	7,992
Kuits Bayou (Open Space)	80	0	6,191	2,650
Grand River Open Space (Open Space)	233	0	6,456	0
Grand River Ravines	187	0	2,640	0
Grand River Park	162	0	2,505	0
Bend Area (Open Space)	258	0	6,931	0
Georgetown East Property	6	0	422	0
Total Grand River Greenway	2,416	0	69,875	29,922
Pigeon River Greenway				
Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend	239	0	7,920	0
Pigeon River Open Space	40	0	2,354	0
Pigeon Creek Park	262	0	3,200	0
Pigeon Creek Forest (Open Space)	130	0	0	0
Total Pigeon River Greenway	691	0	13,474	0
Macatawa River Greenway				
Holland Country Club	122	0	4,815	0
Adams Street Landing	10	0	1,100	0
Hawthorn Pond	40	0	1,792	0
Upper Macatawa Natural Area	612	0	13,100	0
Total Macatawa River Greenway	784	0	20,807	0
Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway				
North Ottawa Dunes	513	0	0	0
North Beach Park	7	745	0	0
Rosy Mound Natural Area	164	3,450	0	0
Kirk Park	68	1,850	0	0
Olive Shores	21	738	0	0
Tunnel Park	23	960	0	0
Historic Ottawa Beach Parks	58	756	0	2,560
Total Lake Michigan Coastal Greenway	853	8,489	0	2,560
General Parks, Open Space and Trails				
Musketawa Trail	NA	0	0	0
Conklin Trailhead	-	0	0	0
Mame Trailhead	-	0	0	0
Un-named Site - Wright Township	8	0	0	0
Grose Park	40	0	0	823
Marne Bog	83	0	0	0
Robinson Forest (Open Space)	80	0	0	0
Johnson Street Forest (Open Space)	50	0	0	0
Hiawatha Forest (Open Space)	365	0	0	0
Hager Park	104	0	0	0
Port Sheldon Natural Area (Open Space)	440	0	0	0
VanBuren Street Dunes (Open Space)	120	0	0	0
Spring Grove Park	16	0	0	0
Riley Trails	300	0	0	0
Total General Parks, Open Spaces and Trails	1,606	0	0	823
GRAND TOTAL	6,350	8,489	104,156	33,305
TOTAL MILES	-	1.6	19.7	6.3

County of Ottawa



The activities and programs of the Parks and Recreation Department are brought to you by the members of the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners.

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