

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission

THE OTTAWA COUNTY
PARKS & 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.



**Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission**

Bobbi Jones Sabine, President

David VanGinhoven, Vice President

Philip D. Kuyers, Secretary

Joe Bush

Tom Elhart

James Holtvluwer

Roger Jonas

Jim Miedema

Ray Statema

Tom Werkman

2013 was a productive year for the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission as it continued efforts to expand and improve the county's system of parks, open spaces and services including outdoor education programs. At the end of 2013, the Ottawa County Parks and Open Space system included 26 County Parks and 13 Open Space lands totaling 6,358 acres.

Park maintenance and operations staff continued to meet the challenge to provide high maintenance standards in the growing park system. Park visitation was unusually high in 2013 with both summer and winter weather conducive to outdoor recreation activities. Trails in the park system continue to attract high numbers of users and the Commission responded by adding trails in several parks. The park system now offers 96 miles of trail for a variety of uses including hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and trail running.

The Parks Commission's commitment to land stewardship was demonstrated through its focus on control of invasive species and efforts to restore high quality habitats. A grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was secured to assist with phragmites control in the lower Grand River along with restoration of wild rice, a

once common plant that is now rare in the watershed. Continued expansion of the volunteer program is providing manpower to assist with labor intensive stewardship activities as well as assist with education programs and other park functions.

The Parks Commission's outdoor education programs continued to grow in popularity in 2013 with a wide range of programs offered including general nature walks, birding trips, nature day camps, 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. The Nature Education Center also serves as a visitor center for the entire county park system.

The Parks Commission efforts to establish greenways along key river corridors and the Lake Michigan coast continued in 2013. Although land acquisition was minimal, 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, most notably the Macatawa Greenspace project where a former golf course was restored to wetland and grasslands and a variety of recreational uses added including hiking trails and disc golf.



INTRODUCTION

The 2013 Annual Report of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission was developed to provide a brief summary of Commission activities for the 2013 calendar year to the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners. Additional information regarding all aspects of Parks Commission activities is available by contacting the County Parks office or by visiting www.miOttawa.org/parks.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARY

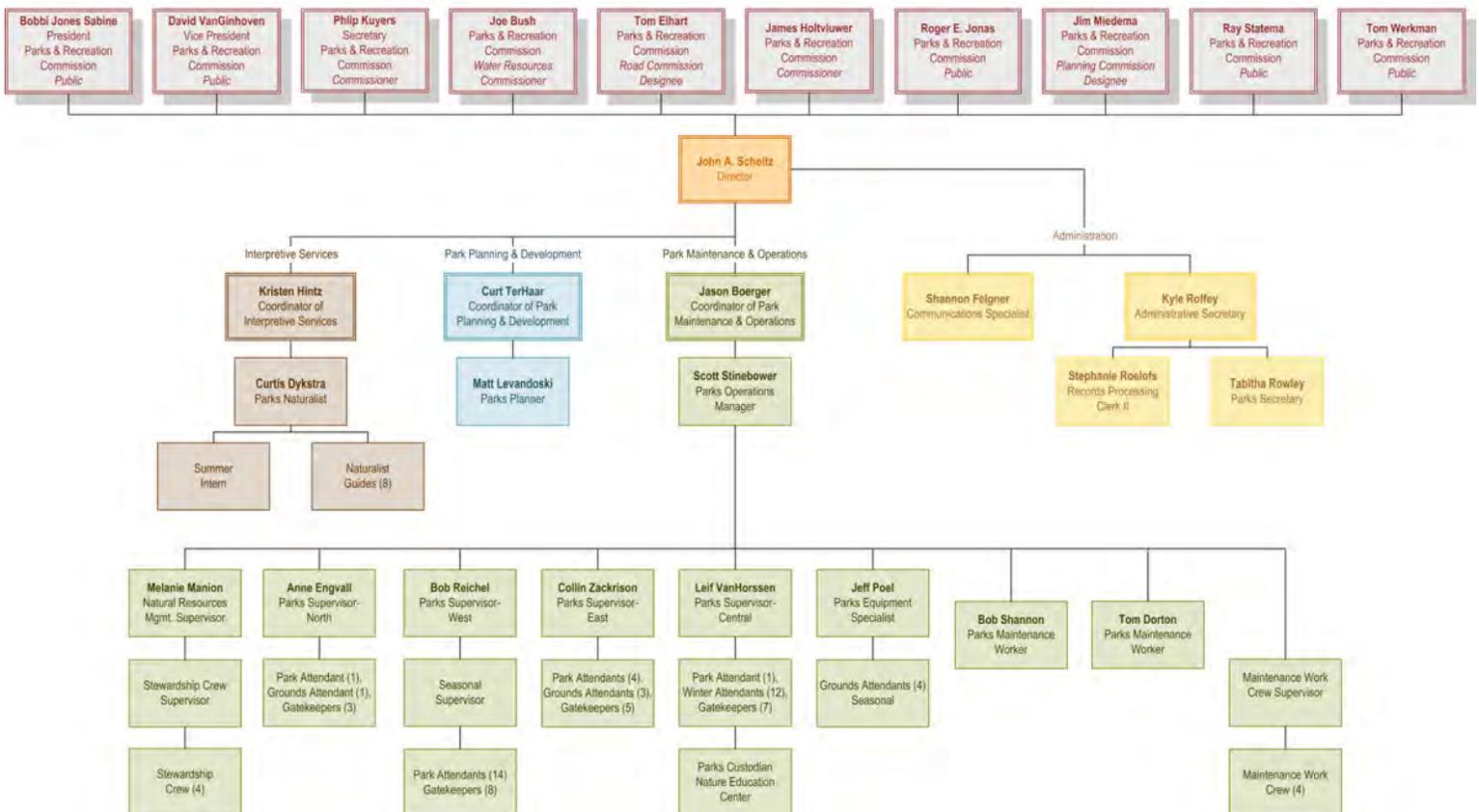
The Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission oversees acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of twenty-six (26) County Parks, 13 Open Space lands, and several undeveloped park properties totaling 6,358 acres (see Appendix A for a listing of all lands administered by the Parks Commission as of December 31, 2013). In addition, the Commission oversees management of

the Ottawa County portion of the Musketawa Trail under an agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The Commission's staff during 2013 consisted of 16 full-time positions, including the Parks and Recreation Director, Coordinator of Park Maintenance and Operations, Parks Manager, six Park Supervisors, two Park Maintenance Workers, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development, Park Planner, Coordinator of Interpretive Services, Park Naturalist, and Administrative Secretary. The Parks Commission also employs a half-time Communications Specialist, 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.



Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission Organizational Chart



INTRODUCTION

The following factors had significant effect on Maintenance & Operations in 2013.

- The big flood in April affected 27 of our 40 sites. Damage included:
 - Two collapsed sections of paved trail
 - Section of access road at Eastmanville Farm washed out
 - Footbridge retaining wall at Hager Park washed out
 - Fishing dock at Grose Park washed out
 - Erosion washouts and numerous up-rooted bollards at several sites
- The establishment of an off-leash dog beach at Kirk Park, which quickly became a popular destination for both county and non-county residents.
- The addition of a new full-time maintenance worker position greatly improved our capacity to keep up with the growing workload



resulting from the growth and development of the park system.

- A significant wind storm in November brought down over 100 trees and damaged seven structures.
- The Parks Commission and staff bid farewell to Dave Mazurek who retired in November after 25 years of service as the Coordinator of Park Maintenance and Operations. We will miss Dave's innovative approach to problem solving, his commitment to excellence, and his sense of humor.

PARK USE SUMMARY

Winter operations at Pigeon Creek Park were busy, thanks in part to the newly renovated Lodge. Feedback was positive regarding the improved ski rental area and increased inventory of rental equipment. Spring floods delayed some routine tasks, including installation of the Eastmanville Bayou kayak launch until July. Summer lakeshore operations started relatively slow but ended well. The use at parks with trails also continued to be strong, as was park visitation at all of the facilities available for reservation. The number of reservations continued to increase.

REVENUES

Pigeon Creek Lodge ski rental and concession revenues were high, netting nearly \$67,000 for the year. Over \$52,000 came in between January and March, and over \$14,000 was the result of a strong start to the 2013-2014 winter season in December.



MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

Favorable summer weather, along with increased motor vehicle permit fees in 2013, helped to establish a new record high of over \$327,500.

Reservation site revenues were over \$102,000, which was another new record. There were 21 facilities available for reservations in the park system, with a total of 1,189 reservations in 2013.

FIELD STAFF FOCUS

- The site clean-up and development of Macatawa Greenspace into a park with over 2 1/2 miles of trail and an 18-hole disc golf course.
- Construction and installation of 285 interpretive, informational, and regulatory signs at various sites. This included both new and replacement signs.
- Significant landscape improvement projects were undertaken at Hager Park, Spring Grove Park, and Pine Bend Park.
- Continued clean-up and restoration of logging impact sites along with significant trail improvements at Riley Trails.
- Construction of new ski racks, boot racks, and lobby furnishings for Pigeon Creek Lodge.



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- OCPRC was awarded a \$110,000 Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Grant

through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to expand the collaborative work of the Ottawa County Invasive Phragmites Group. In the first treatment of this three-year grant, over 40 acres of phragmites was treated on the islands of the Grand River. As part of this grant,

OCPRC will also evaluate our park lands for potential wild rice habitat and transplant a local species of rice that is rare in Michigan into any sites found to be suitable habitat.

- OCPRC also partnered with Consumers Energy to treat the small infestations of invasive phragmites that is starting to spread up the Pigeon River.
- The Stewardship Crew and volunteers continued to manage the invasive species that threaten ecosystems within the park system. Though the majority of the season was spent on garlic mustard and spotted knapweed, over 30 species of plants were surveyed for and treated at 39 properties. Over 15 OCPRC properties have been designated as "Garlic Mustard Free" (free of flowering plants) through the Stewardship Network's Garlic Mustard Challenge, more than any other organization in the state.
- The Stewardship Crew also assisted with several native plantings within OCPRC properties, including the formal landscape in front of the Nature Education Center.
- OCPRC worked with ten schools to offer service-based learning opportunities to students, including 350

White Pines Middle School students and approximately 275 Grand Haven High School students, who removed litter and invasive species at seven parks and open spaces.

- Two native tree nurseries were created with the intent of being more sustainable with the trees and shrubs used for landscaping projects, by using native species grown from seed collected on OCPRC properties.

VOLUNTEERING

- The Michigan Edge Mountain Bike Association, the local chapter of the Michigan Mountain Bike Association, donated almost 750 hours of volunteer labor to design and construct a single-track mountain bike path through the ravines at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, including six wooden bridges. This trail system is not only bringing a new user group to the park, it has also provided accessibility to a once inaccessible part of the property for other users like birdwatchers and snowshoers.
- A total of 15 OCPRC properties have been adopted through the Adopt-A-Park program by the end of 2013. New organizations in 2013 included Home Depot, who have been assisting with maintenance of Hager Park; Tri-Cities Garden Club, who helped design and install the new gardens at Weaver

House; JCI, who donated \$1000 to help with the restoration work at Riley Trails; and Harbor Industries, who have been working to manage invasive species at Olive Shores.

- Friends of Ottawa County Parks successfully nominated OCPRC for the WOOD-TV 8 Connecting with Community Award. As a finalist, OCPRC was recognized for its long tradition of working with partners within the community to foster a connection to the natural world.
- Friends of Ottawa County Parks held numerous successful outreach events throughout the year, including, but not limited to, a Community Picnic at Grose Park and an increasingly popular event at the Weaver House with Santa.



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 third full year of operation at the Nature Education Center (NEC) and a year full of transitions.

Kristen Hintz began her new role as Coordinator of Interpretive Services in January, and Curtis Dykstra was hired in February as the Parks Naturalist. Over the year, Kristen and Curtis worked together to streamline scheduling, track program numbers, and increase naturalist guide communication and involvement through the use of Google applications.

The organizational structuring of NEC procedures this year provided the structural foundation and program data needed to build and track public participation in Ottawa County Parks Interpretive Services over the next three years. To accomplish this goal, we identified and focused on four areas:

- Increased the number of family programs offered on Sundays
- Offer a greater diversity of programs at a variety of parks
- Provide more summer camp opportunities
- Upgrade the Nature Education Center exhibits to draw return visitors

VISITORS

Total NEC visitation (excluding programs) in 2013 was 3,352 people.

NEC staff spent 6,582 hours of roving interpretation time with visitors answering general park questions and natural history inquiries at the desk and informally interacting with visitors in the Wildlife Den. Adding new activities to the Wildlife Den and taking the time to interact with visitors continues to bring people back to the Nature Education Center.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

A total of 2,039 people participated in 183 programs, which equaled 448 program hours. To increase participation in public programming we offered programs to address varied hobbies, interests, and activity levels of park users. Regular Sunday family programs were provided during the year, and the number of summer camp opportunities were also increased.

- **Art and Nature:** This year, we partnered with Nancy Berg to offer six nature and art programs for adults and children. Overall, Nancy had

2013 Programs

	Public Programs	Public Program Participants	School/Private Programs	School Program Participants
January	15	317	1	15
February	13	139	4	86
March	13	168	3	97
April	15	134	10	871
May	21	170	15	669
June	17	121	4	200
July	14	139	5	142
August	14	196	2	80
September	15	161	5	122
October	18	191	17	645
November	17	173	7	249
December	11	130	2	33
TOTALS	183	2,039	75	3,209

52 participants, some who were first-time visitors to the Nature Education Center. The classes were well received, and there were several requests to offer more sessions.

o **Coffee with the Birds:**

Curtis introduced an informal program called "Coffee with the Birds." The first Friday morning of each month, people gathered in the Wildlife Den to observe birds and discuss current birding topics while enjoying donated coffee from Simpatico and baked goods from DeBoer's Bakery. Participant numbers steadily increased from less than ten people to a full room of 35 people of all ages and birding backgrounds. This informal gathering brought a diverse group of people together and opened



doors to forming new relationships amongst the birding community.

o **Camping Program:**

Through a North Face Camping grant, the Nature Education Center was able to purchase tents and camping supplies for a Camping 101 program. This program included an introduction to having a successful outdoor experience, an outside cooking class, and a weekend overnight. We had a total of 18 participants.

o **Sunday Family Programs:**

Daily nature center attendance records over the past two years show that Sunday afternoons are the busiest days through-out the year. We offered 30 family programs this year each Sunday from 2-3 PM during the winter, spring, and fall. Several families regularly attended these programs throughout the year, and many people expressed gratitude for offering consistent Sunday family programs. There was an average of 15 participants for



each program; however, six of the 30 programs had over 25 participants.

- **Increased Summer Camp Opportunities:** We increased the number of summer camps offered this year by involving all naturalist guides in the designing, planning and leading of summer camps. We offered a total of 23 programs for three age groups: Pre-school, lower elementary and upper elementary, and two Wetland Detective sessions for middle school students. We had 193 children and adults participate in the 25 camp programs offered. The low average number of participants per camp was due to late marketing of camp programs. We learned that camps need to be marketed in the spring newsletter instead of the summer newsletter.



PRIVATE PROGRAMS

We scheduled 75 private programs in 2013 which brought \$3,332 of revenue and reached over 3,209 people. Private programs consist of any program that is scheduled, requires a naturalist guide, and is charged a program fee. These numbers reflect programs for school groups (43), senior residential groups (6), scout groups (11), homeschool groups (2), and afterschool or summer daycare programs (7). There are always a few programs that don't fit

in a category, such as those for community outreach events or programs for special groups (6). 58% of the school programs this year were for repeat groups, which means we are doing a great job! Our goal for 2014 is to increase the number of new groups to above 50%. April, May, and October were the busiest months for private programs.

- **Year-long nature-preschool program:** We partnered with Rose Park Christian School to offer a nature-based preschool program for the 2013-2014 school year. Naturalist guides Carla Kocher and Jeanine Roberts developed and taught 13 programs that began in September and will conclude May 15, 2014. Parents, teachers, and children enjoyed the program so much that the partnership will continue for the 2014-2015 school year and another section will be added to the 2014-2015 year.

- **Lakeshore Middle School Earth Day Event:** April 22, 2013 was the first "big program event" at Hemlock Crossing. Two hundred 7th grade students from Lakeshore Middle School rotated through six stations learning about recreational opportunities in the parks,

invasive species, watersheds and wetlands, Michigan birds and their songs, and the history of Michigan's forest. The program was a great success thanks to the dedication of naturalist guides and OCP volunteers.

COMMUNICATIONS

Following a 2012 report from a consultant underscoring the need for strategic communications, the Commission hired a half-time staff in 2013 to oversee and carry-out the public relations duties of the department. The communication specialist was hired to ensure consistent, deliberate messaging and improve upon existing tools.

NEWSLETTER & OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Outdoors Ottawa County is the quarterly newsletter of Ottawa County Parks & Recreation. The newsletter provides current information on park projects, and is the primary communication vehicle for sharing the seasonal schedule of educational programs and various park events. During 2013, both the print and digital versions of the newsletter were overhauled. The printed edition was graphically redesigned to grab a viewer's attention. An addition of a calendar offered a visual representation of events and encouraged recipients to keep and display the newsletter in their home. The digital version was restructured to improve the on-screen experience, to include the event calendar, and to be conducive for home printing.

At the end of 2012, the newsletter was received by 7,300 households per quarter. Over the course of 2013, that number increased by 23% to 9,015 recipients. This was the greatest jump in subscriptions since 2009, when a

push was made during the sale of annual vehicle permits.

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. Brochures are aggressively distributed through the Parks Office, Nature Education Center, local government offices, area visitor bureaus, and other outlets. In 2013, the brochure was added to the Michigan Department of Transportation's approved distribution list, and is now displayed at the state's Welcome Center Rest Areas in Clare, Coldwater, Monroe, New Buffalo, Mackinaw City and Port Huron. In 2013, a total of 1,600 brochures were distributed through this venue.

Key publications communicating the dog policy and the hunting regulations were reworked to improve clarity and accentuate a welcoming tone, as was the collateral website information.

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 1600 people.



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Ottawa County Parks began utilizing Facebook in July of 2011. While an audience of over 800 users was admirable, the growth rate had slowed and engagement had tapered. After an evaluation of the social network's metrics, strategies were employed to enhance the Facebook experience and increase its reach. Tactics such as calculating the schedule of posts, creating more interactive and inviting content, plus cross-pollinating the park by intermingling with other pages proved effective. During 2013, there was a 187% increase of page followers increasing from 814 "likes" on January 1 to 2,337 "likes" by December 31. During the course of the year, Facebook posts generated 836,374 impressions and 13,390 interactions on the social media platform.



WEBSITE

Continual improvements were made to miOttawa.org/parks in 2013. A complete redesign of the parent website, miOttawa.org, transformed the site to a mobile-friendly version. Following this, the parks reworked many existing pages and added other pages altogether. While all of the changes are too comprehensive to list, the department aimed to create an intuitive, concise, and visually stimulating user experience. 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.

MEDIA RELATIONS

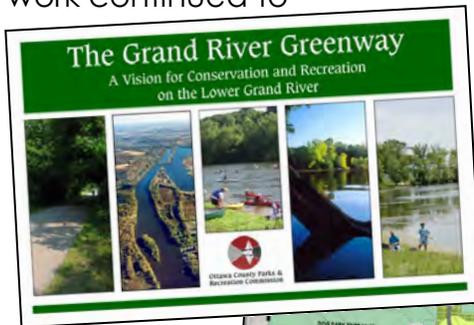
In the absence of a generous marketing budget, media relations is critical to earning publicity in local news outlets. Along with the promotion of park programs and properties, ensuring regular interaction and easy access to our staff experts can boost both favorable coverage and prominent placement. During 2013, Ottawa County Parks disseminated 22 press releases and fulfilled multiple requests for photos and articles for *Inside Grand Haven*, *Zeeland Life*, and other magazines. These niche publications featured Ottawa County Parks on two front covers and dedicated more than four full pages to park activities.

In addition, the Holland Sentinel Editorial Board candidly backed the June 2013 opening of Macatawa Greenspace, not only by publicizing the grand opening but supporting it with an opinion piece. The editorial article underscored the value of the park to the community and emphasized the Ottawa County Parks' role in land stewardship. The *Holland Sentinel* Editorial Board wrote "... Macatawa Greenspace is one of the most important recreational spaces developed by the Ottawa County Parks Department...County parks officials sought not just to preserve and showcase the local natural environment but to improve it - the restored wetlands at the park will slow the flow of the river and filter out many of the sediments that contribute to the cloudiness of Lake Macatawa." This third-party endorsement of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission is priceless.

PARK PLANNING

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

- Grand Ravines Master Planning:** The master plan for this 187-acre site located on the Grand River just south of Grand Valley State University was completed by park staff and approved by the Parks Commission. 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.
- Grand River Greenway Planning:** Extensive work continued to determine options and costs for property acquisitions and trail construction along the south side of the Grand River. Promotional materials and presentations were also developed to explain the project to potential public and private funders.
- UMNA Greenway Path:** Detailed design and construction documents were substantially completed for two miles of paved trail through the Upper Macatawa Natural Area.
- Ottawa Beach Walkway Design Development:** Detailed design, engineering, and permitting was completed for this waterfront project which will connect the previ-



ously completed Black Lake Boardwalk parking area and the Holland Harbor Fishing Access.

- Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Access Improvements:** Park staff initiated planning for improvements to this existing parking area in anticipation of more park visitors using the new paved walkway and mountain bike trails.
- Bur Oak Trail Planning:** Field work was initiated to determine locations for new trails to expand the existing trail system.
- Kirk Park Trail Signage:** Graphic design work was completed to update and improve signage on the existing trail system.
- Grose Park Shoreline Improvements:** Research and design was completed to reconstruct damaged structures along Crockery Lake and stabilize eroding shoreline areas.
- Grand Ravines South Parking:** Design development was substantially completed for this project to enlarge the existing parking area accessed from Fillmore Street in response to heavy use at certain times of the year and in anticipation of other park improvements in the near future.

LAND ACQUISITION

Only two very small property acquisitions were completed in 2013 as the Commission's focus gradually shifted to providing access, improvements, stewardship and program opportunities on existing lands. A 1.6-acre property was acquired to fill an ownership gap at Bur Oak Landing to facilitate trail development. Also, a six-acre parcel was donated near the Pigeon River to expand open space land located just east of US-31. The Pigeon

River Open Space now totals 46 acres, thanks to a series of donations by L.W. Pete and Nancy Timmer of Lake Alfred, Florida, since 2005.

Total acreage of the system was 6,358 acres at the end of 2013. Although acquisition efforts are slowing, there are still key properties and easements to acquire to complete greenways and trail projects on the Grand and Macatawa Rivers. The Parks Commission will also be looking for opportunities to expand existing properties according to park master plans when adjacent high-quality natural lands become available.

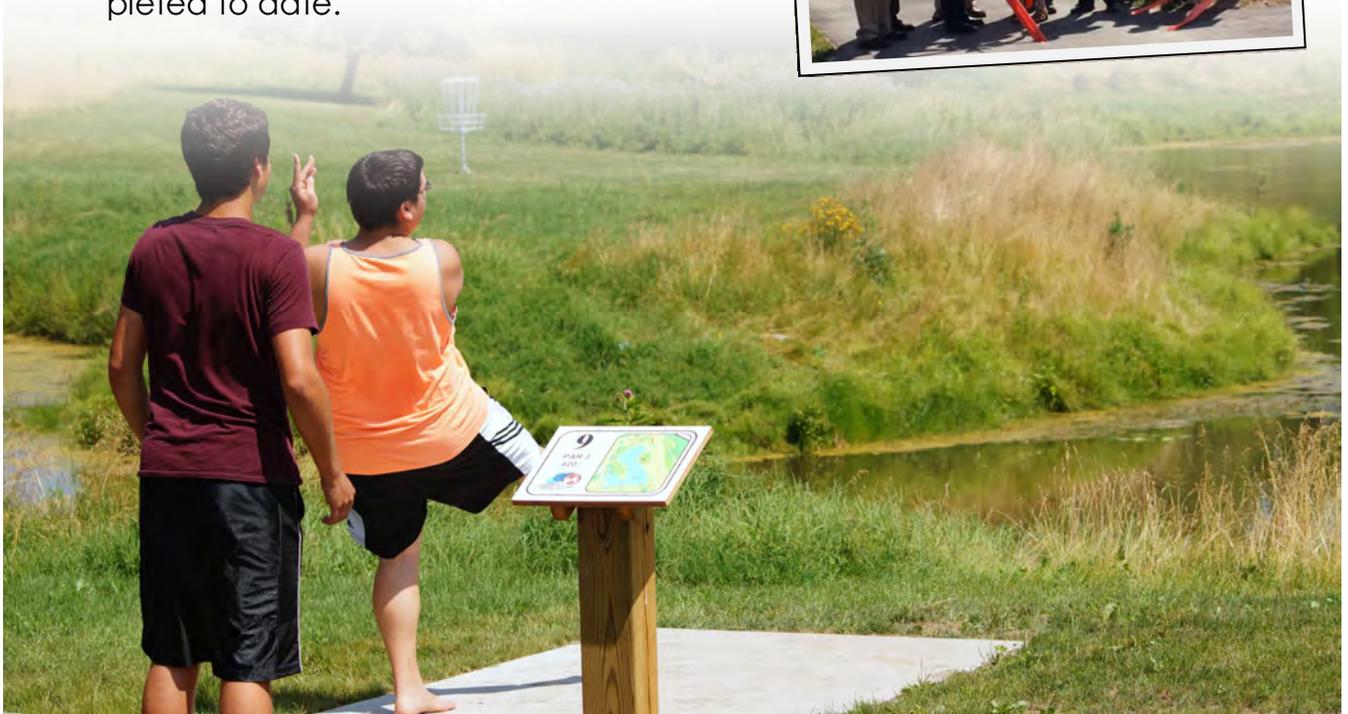
PARK DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENTS

Significant park improvement projects undertaken in 2013 are as follows:

- **Ottawa Beach (Park 12) Walkway Repairs:** As part of a scheduled sequence of public walkway improvements, another significant section of badly deteriorated concrete walkway was removed and replaced. This was the fifth phase of walkway improvements completed to date.

- **Macatawa Greenspace (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 completed. The park was officially opened in June 2013 and has become extremely popular with walkers and disc golfers.



- **Grand River Open Space Access Improvements:** A new entrance drive, parking area, rustic toilet, and kiosk were completed and opened on this newly acquired site to provide better public amenities for hunters and other park users.
- **Connor Bayou:** Construction was completed to add visitor amenities to this beautiful, but undeveloped site. After the significant spring flooding, improvements to the trail system along the Grand River shoreline were finalized.
- **Pine Bend Garden Area:** Construction was substantially completed for the area around the Weaver House at Pine Bend to better facilitate weddings and other outdoor events. Improvements included renovation of an historic cottage, construction of a ceremonial platform, landscaping, and irrigation.
- **DeVries/Vanderlaan Room Landscape:** New irrigation and landscaping were installed by park staff and volunteers.
- **Grose Park Fishing Pier Reconstruction:** This popular deck on the edge of Crockery Lake was completely rebuilt after extensive damage due to spring flooding.
- **Pigeon Creek Park Parking Expansion:** In response to heavy winter use and potential safety concerns with park users parking along Stanton Street, the existing gravel parking area was expanded from 120 to 190 spaces.
- **Grand River Accessible Kayak Launches:** Overwhelming positive response to the universally accessible kayak launch dock installed at Eastmanville Bayou prompted additional launches upstream and downstream from the original launch. One at Connor Bayou was installed in the fall of 2013 with the second at Grand River Park to be installed in the spring of 2014.

- **Riley Trails Improvements:** A series of improvements were implemented, prompted by restoration of areas recently clear-cut and thinned of red pine. Trail surface improvements including gravel surfacing in many areas, designation of a four-mile long mountain bike trail loop, and installation of improved trail maps and other signage.



PARKS COMMISSION GOALS

- **Integrate New Operational Commitments While Continuing High Quality Park Operations:** With its commitment to high quality maintenance, the Parks Commission will continue its focus on maintaining its operational capabilities at a high level as the park system grows and evolves.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Continue emphasis on cost accounting and reducing costs, exploring new revenue sources and operating in the most cost-effective manner possible to best utilize property tax revenues.
- **Diversified Funding Strategy:** 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. The Commission will take the next steps to establish a Parks Foundation as a focal point for fund-raising efforts.
- **Volunteer Program:** Continue to expand the volunteer program in accordance with established plans to assist with park stewardship activities, park maintenance functions and outdoor education programming.
- **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. Increase efforts to raise awareness of the Nature Education Center and program opportunities. Expand efforts to secure donations for the Nature Education Center Endowment Fund.

- **Public Relations:** Evaluate a transition to a full-time communications specialist in 2015 based on positive progress made in 2013 with a half-time position. Continue to improve the website and expand use of social media. Be proactive in exploring all existing media outlets as well as new means of communication to familiarize Ottawa County residents with their county park system and programs.
- **Friends Group:** Continue close coordination and collaboration with

Friends of Ottawa County Parks, which serves as a valuable support group for Ottawa County park system.

- **Stewardship Activities:** Continue to provide a high level of land stewardship through control of invasive species, development of land management and stewardship plans, restoration of degraded sites and managed deer hunts. Continue to inventory natural features throughout the park system with special focus on the lakeshore including efforts to secure

grant funds to bring in expert assistance as needed.

- **Sustainability:** Complete sustainability plan for the park system encompassing environmental sustainability as well as social and financial sustainability. Take initial steps to implement the plan.

- **Accessibility:** Stay committed to achieving universal accessibility throughout the park system while constructing new facilities and modifying existing parks. Complete installation of two universally accessible kayak launches within the Grand River Greenway.



- **Open Space Lands:** Continue 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. Efforts will continue to monitor and acquire target properties in the river corridor, seeking grant support as needed.
 - **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:** Implement the recently completed master plan including improvements to the south access to expand parking. Seek funding from public and private sources for a major park improvement project in 2015.
- **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 Greenway Trail:** With grant assistance from the Michigan Department of Transportation, develop 2+ 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:** Complete improvements to 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.

Ottawa County Parks and Open Spaces Acreage and Water Frontage

As of December 31, 2013

Parks & 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)	263	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	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	2,418	0	69,875	29,922
Pigeon River Greenway				
Hemlock Crossing/Pine Bend	239	0	7,920	0
Pigeon River Open Space	46	0	2,354	0
Pigeon Creek Park	282	0	3,200	0
Pigeon Creek Forest (Open Space)	130	0	0	0
Total Pigeon River Greenway	697	0	13,474	0
Macatawa River Greenway				
Macatawa Greenspace	122	0	4,815	0
Adams Street Landing	10	0	1,100	0
Hawthorn Pond Natural Area	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	950	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 Spaces and Trails				
Musketawa Trail	N/A	0	0	0
Conklin Trailhead	-	0	0	0
Marne 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	0
GRAND TOTAL	6,358	8,489	104,156	33,305
TOTAL MILES		1.6	19.7	6.3



Trellis at Spring Grove Park with wisteria in bloom

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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