



Section L:

Priorities

St. Joseph County Parks

Master Plan Update • 2009 – 2013



Priorities

L•1

Priority Criteria

After careful analysis of the issues identified by the St. Joseph County Parks and Recreation Department, the Consultant, and through the results of the Focus Groups, the Master Planning Task Force identified priority criteria. Each of the various issue items are assigned a priority according to the following factors:

1. Financial Feasibility
2. Available Staff or Partnership Resources
3. Existing Facilities
4. Need and Overall Impact on Visitors or the County
5. Practicality

Priority Ratings

After these factors were applied to each issue, the issues were then assigned to one of the three priority levels:

- Priority “A” – of Primary Concern and feasible to implement in the next five years. These priorities will form the projected Action Plan for the next five years.
- Priority “B” – of Secondary Concern, but still feasible to implement in the next five to ten years.
- Priority “C” – may be of Primary or Secondary Concern, but the feasibility of the action is questionable during the next five years. Issue may fall into a 10 to 20 year action time frame.

The Action Plan section of this document (Section M) addresses the implementation, and projected schedule for completion and various funding sources.

State Planning Priorities: The Tie-In

The State of Indiana adopted a state-wide plan of priorities that are recommended for development over the period of its current Outdoor Recreation Plan. The State’s priorities are based upon the overall objectives of providing for a wide range of recreational opportunities and experiences that will reinforce positive social and cultural values. These opportunities should be available to enrich the lives of all of Indiana’s residents and visitors.

By identifying priorities and opportunities that relate directly to one or more of these State Priorities, St. Joseph County Parks and Recreation Department’s position is enhanced when competing for Federal and State funding programs. The State Priorities closely parallel the St. Joseph County Park and Recreation Department’s goals and objectives



Outdoor Recreation Priorities

Taken from: "Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan 2006-2010, Hoosiers Moving Forward", provided by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

- 1) Promote long-term planning, budgeting and evaluation for recreation sites, facilities, and equipment maintenance and replacement. Consider:
 - Life cycle
 - Preventive maintenance
 - Projected increased upkeep costs as sites, facilities or equipment age
 - Renovation/replacement for changing user needs
 - Demolition, removal or recycling
 - Replacement costs for end of life cycle
 - Changing demographics
 - Universal design
 - Adaptability for changing trends
 - Cultural diversity
 - Increasing or decreasing user/server populations
 - Decreases in user travel time
 - Fluctuations in tourism
 - Local population variations

- 2) Investigate non-traditional methods of funding and cost reduction. Consider:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not-for-profit organizations• Private groups/"Friends of ..." groups• Sponsorships• Naming rights• Donations/In kind• Monetary• Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Products• Land• Buildings• Equipment• Bequests• Endowments• Volunteers• Partnering
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- 3) Improve marketing of current and proposed recreation opportunities to local communities, tourists, marginal consumers and prospective stakeholders to increase site awareness, user population and revenues. Consider:
 - Product, planning, promotion, and price
 - Targeted audiences
 - Multi-media sources
 - Effective outreach to the target population
 - Benefits to consumer and economy
 - Public presentations
 - In-house presentations
 - Public education and awareness of current or proposed outdoor recreation opportunities
 - Sharing ownership
 - Networking with outdoor recreational specialists
 - Networking with professionals in tangential fields (e.g., health and wellness, engineering and education)

St. Joseph County Parks

Master Plan Update • 2009 – 2013



Priorities

L•3

- 4) Research, develop and implement capital projects that are pertinent to the community and mesh effectively with existing facilities.
 - Develop and submit a five-year master plan to the Division of Outdoor Recreation
 - Advocate public participation in the planning process
 - Assess local community needs
 - Stakeholder surveys and focus groups
 - User and non-user surveys and focus groups
 - Community diversity discussions
 - Remain aware of grant availability, criteria, and application process to ensure grant submissions are complete, accurate and meet mandated guidelines
 - Avoid duplicating facilities or programs in surrounding area
 - Include land acquisition as often as possible
 - Review and parallel national, regional and local initiatives and trends, following benchmark examples
- 5) Increase multi-use trails systems. Consider:
 - Extremely high demand for pedestrian-friendly facilities
 - Connections to desirable locations, such as parks, schools, existing trails, historic attractions, business districts and residential areas
 - Including multiple natural settings (e.g., woodlands, wetlands, prairies, streams)
 - Signs, safety, maps/guides (hard copy and Internet), and future maintenance
 - Universal design
- 6) Facilitate meeting consumer needs for low-cost, close-to-home, minimal equipment expenditure, and natural-talent-oriented outdoor activities and opportunities. Consider:
 - Facilities/programs designed for
 - People seeking social interaction
 - Low socioeconomic-status individuals
 - Persons with disabilities or limitations
 - Overweight/obese population
 - Aging population, particularly those with increased chronic conditions and their related limitations
 - Passive and extreme recreation opportunities



Proposed Actions & Priorities

Section M of this document reflects the proposed priorities and action plan items documented by this study. The Action Priority Matrix lists each action / priority under the following headings:

1. **Action Year:** Indicates the year each action is scheduled for implementation.
2. **Estimated Costs:** Indicates the anticipated expense of that action element. Cost estimates reflect 2009 costs. An appropriate inflation factor will need to be factored into future action years.
3. **Funding Sources:** Refers to the Funding Source Legend noted at the top of each page of the Action Priority Matrix. Each Action line item has a main source or sources of possible funding assigned to it. Other funding sources have also been listed and should be considered to augment the main source(s) if necessary.
4. **Strategy:** Indicates strategic areas of focus for the next five-year period as determined by community feedback and departmental analysis.

