



VIGO COUNTY  
PARKS & RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT

# **Vigo County, Indiana 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

## **2025 To 2029**

**A System-wide Master Plan by the Vigo County Park and  
Recreation Board and the Vigo County Parks and Recreation  
Department**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 2025-2029 Master Plan Introduction

Welcome to the Vigo County Parks in Indiana!

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department is a key provider of natural spaces, recreational opportunities, and educational programming for the county. The nearly 2,700 acres of versatile parkland managed by the department is valued by its community and appreciated by its users. The Vigo County Parks system is dedicated to passive and active recreational areas where families and individuals can recreate through hiking, camping, playing, fishing, boating, biking, wildlife viewing, learning, and so much more. Vigo County public parkland currently encompasses a unique combination of open space, forests, prairies, lakes, wetlands, historical sites, and community parks.

A comprehensive parks and recreation master plan sets forth a five-year strategy that is challenging yet achievable. In the past decade, the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department has seen nominal annual budget increases and has undergone tremendous growth, acquiring hundreds of acres, without having significant staff growth and expanding community programming. However, the department has made incredible strides in bolstering a culture of productivity and hard work. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation staff are dedicated to maintaining and enjoying the beautiful parkland they call home.

The 2025-2029 Master Plan provides an appropriate road map for the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to implement the expressed wants and needs of the public with a sound understanding of the milestones required to achieve success, through industry best practices, preparing the department to achieve excellence and best serve the citizens of Vigo County.

## **Definition of the Planning Area**

The planning area for Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department is any public parkland located within Vigo County limits not owned, maintained or managed by other public entities or the State of Indiana. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department planning area serves all citizens of Vigo County, including those that visit the county. Vigo County is centrally located along the western border of the State of Indiana along the Wabash River.

There are four incorporated settlements within Vigo County. The largest, Terre Haute, has a population of just under 60,000 and covers all of Harrison Township and extends into several surrounding townships. West Terre Haute, as its name indicates, lies to the west, along U.S. Route 40 and has a population of just over 2,100. The town of Seelyville lies to the east of Terre Haute, also along U.S. Route 40, with a population of just over 1,000. The smallest town, Riley, is southeast of Terre Haute and has a population of about 200.

## **Goals of the Plan**

After much discussion, the Vigo County Parks Department staff and the Parks Board have agreed on the following goals for the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan:

- Gather feedback and input from as diverse a group of Vigo County residents as possible and report it in an accurate manner, reflecting that input in the parks system.
- Use national recreation standards, combined with a careful needs analysis to create new strategic priorities for parks and recreation in the county.
- Create an actionable plan that accomplishes goals in an effective manner.
- Present the plan and gain its acceptance within the community.
- Submit the master plan to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of State Parks, Community Grants and Trails, adhering to the required timeframe for a draft by Nov. 15 and finalized plans by the following April 15.
- Receive approval from IDNR for eligibility for application for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant programs.

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- Use the plan as a springboard to apply for all applicable grants

### **Purpose of the plan**

## **The Park Board/Department**

### **The Park Board**

The Vigo County Council passed Ordinance No. 1 on November 5, 1965, establishing the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board in accordance with Indiana Code 36-10-3, General Park and Recreation Law. The first Board was appointed on December 13, 1965, and held its first meeting on January 25, 1966. The ordinance was amended on October 26, 1982, reestablishing the Board. On October 26, 2009, the Board approved amending the name of the organization to Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department, adding an 's' to Park to identify the expansion of the parks system. This amended the Board name also; hereafter called the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board operated in accordance with Indiana Code 36-10-3, General Park and Recreation Law.

The Board consists of seven members who serve four-year terms. Two members of the Board are appointed by the judge of the Circuit Court, one member by the County Commissioners, and two by the County Council. These members are appointed based on their interest in and knowledge of parks and recreation. No more than one member appointed by these entities shall be affiliated with the same political party. The County Extension Committee (Board) may select one of its members, the County Extension Coordinator or the County Extension Agent, to serve as an ex officio board member. Lastly, the Mayor of Terre Haute also appoints one member as an ex officio board member, whose four-year term runs concurrent with the Mayoral term. The member appointed by the mayor must be affiliated with a different political party than the member appointed by the County Commissioners. By virtue of the appointment process, the Board is bipartisan.

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At each January meeting, the current Board members nominate individuals on the Board to serve in the officer positions. Officers of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board are elected by the current members of the Board.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board meets the fourth Monday of each month, unless conflict forces an alternate date. When necessary, the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board will meet in Executive Session in accordance with Indiana Code 5-14-1.5, Public Meetings (Open Door Law).

The current Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board is:

Abby Desboro, Board President

Appointed by: Vigo County Commissioners

Term ends: 12/31/28

Jeffrey Fisher, Vice President

Appointed by: Circuit Court Judge

Term ends: 12/31/25

Eddy Adams, Board Secretary/ Treasurer

Appointed by: Circuit Court Judge

Term ends: 12/31/25

Joseph Newton

Appointed by: Vigo County Council

Term ends: 12/31/28

Aaron Gadberry

Appointed by: Vigo County Council

Term ends: 12/31/28

Tabby Flynn

1Appointed by: Vigo County Extension Board

Term ends: none



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Kilie Smith

Appointed by: Terre Haute City Mayor

Term ends: 12/31/27

### **The Park Department**

#### Park Office

The main office for the parks department is in the Vigo County Annex, located at 155 Oak St, Terre Haute, IN 47807. The phone number is: (812) 462-3392.

Website: [www.vigoparks.org](http://www.vigoparks.org)

#### Mission

- The Mission of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department is: “To improve quality of life and provide meaningful experiences for the citizens of Vigo County through expertly maintained areas and facilities, environmental education, accessible water, and preservation of the environment allowing for recreation, social activity, exploration and solitude.”

#### Vision

- The Vision of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department is to meet the recreation and leisure needs of Vigo County citizens and visitors, leading to a heightened quality of life.

#### Park Board’s Departmental Vision and Goals for the Next Five Years

- The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department will offer a level of service appropriate to the size and growth of the community.
- The Department will provide new opportunities for exercise, fitness and wellness for the community at large.
- The Department should act as a central part of daily quality of life in the community, providing a city identity and a focus for the people of Vigo County.

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### Staff

Park Superintendent: Adam Grossman

Hired: 2013

Assistant Superintendent: Stanley (Brian) Gilbert

Hired: 2015

Office Manager: Michaela Loveall

Hired: 2024

Griffin Bike Park Manager: Rich Moore

Hired: 2017

Natural Resource Programmer: Heather Cosme Milian

Hired: 2023

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department also employs one part-time recreation coordinator, eight full-time maintenance staff, five part-time maintenance staff, and seasonal employees each year.

### Volunteers

The Vigo County Parks have many volunteers to help accomplish goals for the community. The Fowler Park Pioneer Village Folk helps to support the pioneer village and teach Indiana history and handcraft skills. These volunteers come out at times by the hundreds to help with events and education, along with some maintenance items. The Friends of Griffin Bike Park were established before opening to help get the park going, and since have helped with events and maintenance. Riverscape is a non-profit that has also been a huge help with property maintenance along the river and bringing education to the Wabashiki Wetlands.

Friends of Griffin Bike Park/Shepherds of Griffin Bike Park

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The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department has benefited tremendously from the creation of the “Friends of Griffin Bike Park” group in 2015, and their “Griffin Bike Park Fund” under the Wabash Valley Community Foundation. Many of our volunteers come to us with our Friends group's assistance, and the financial aid we receive from the Park Fund has allowed us to maintain current staffing and program levels despite significant budget cuts. The current chair of the Friends of Griffin Bike Park is Mike Peterson; he may be reached through his personal phone at 812-208-0851. Donations, memorials, contributions, or bequests to the Griffin Bike Park Fund may be made through the Wabash Valley Community Foundation at 200 South Eighth Street, Terre Haute In; phone: 812-232-2234.

### **Facility Inventory**

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department is an important provider of natural spaces, recreational opportunities and educational programming for the residents and visitors of Vigo County. The Parks Department boasts a total acreage of 2,690.17 acres of parkland and 143.00 acres of water. The first park in the system opened in 1967 and the newest park was opened in 2022. The following is a synopsis of the Vigo County parks:

#### Fowler Park

Located at 3000 E. Oregon Church Road, Terre Haute, IN 47802. In 1967, 140 acres of land in the south-central area of Vigo County was purchased from the Peabody Coal Company to establish the first county park- Fowler Park. The park was dedicated to the memory of Eugene Fowler, the first man to lose his life in the Vietnam War. Additional land, with a house, was purchased in 1970 for use as a caretaker's home. Approximately 300 acres of land east of Fowler Park were donated in 1981, named the Fowler Park Wilderness Area. The last addition of land was in 1995; land north of the park was purchased, bringing it to 462.82 acres.

Located one-half mile off of U.S. 41 on Oregon Church Road, Fowler Park serves as a multipurpose park. Inside the park are two lakes, a campground, picnic shelters, playgrounds, trails, a covered bridge and a pioneer village with a working gristmill. Ruble

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Lake has a boat launch, kayak launch, and a beach for swimming. The lake is stocked with largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, channel catfish and black crappie.

The peninsulas on the east side of the lake are utilized as the campground. Fowler Park is the only county park where the campground is located next to the lake's edge. The campground has 15 sites with direct water hook up and electricity, 34 sites with electricity, 1 cabin rental and 10 primitive sites. Shower houses, restrooms and a dump station are also available to campers. The camping season begins in late April and goes on until early November.

Two picnic shelters on the parkland each hold between 150-200 people. A large playground is adjacent to Shelter A (on the east side of Ruble Lake) and a smaller one is adjacent to Shelter B (on the west side of Ruble Lake). There is a beach for swimming on the lake's west side that also has a beach house.

Six hiking trails wind through Fowler Park's woodlands, with trailheads at the road on the west side of the park. Trails range in difficulty from easy to moderate for hikers. There is a second lake located on the west side of the park hidden behind a hillside off the trails.

Largemouth bass, crappie and bluegill are found in that lake.

The Pioneer Village consists of 20 log buildings, a log barn, a gristmill and a covered bridge. The log barn houses a gift shop and a public meeting/ banquet room available to rent. The Pioneer Village is the center attraction of several events and programs held annually at the park.

### Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetland

Located at 6067 E. Old Maple Ave., Terre Haute, IN 47803. A major multi-purpose park was established in the northeast section of the county in 1980 when 233.22 acres of land was purchased in the Lost Creek Township. Of that acreage, 206.55 acres (originally owned by Anton Hulman) was purchased from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and 26.67 acres from Herbert and Lorene Miss. As an abundance of hawthorn trees were growing on the property, the park was named Hawthorn Park. The caretaker's home and the maintenance shops were located on Moss property, across the road from the park property. In 1985, the Vigo County Commissioners deeded approximately 23.5 acres to the Parks Board. This addition brought the total acreage of Hawthorn Park to 256.72 acres.

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Located on East Old Maple Avenue, Hawthorn is six-tenths of a mile north of U.S. 40 off of Hunt Road. The park is divided into two major areas of land, Hawthorn Park in the west and J.I. Case Wetland on the east. On the park's southern boundary is Rose Hulman Institute of Technology and the Heritage Road National Trail.

Inside Hawthorn Park is a lake, campground, picnic shelters, playgrounds, an archery range, trails and a labyrinth. Burns Lake has a boat launch, kayak launch, and fishing docking located around the lake's north side. The lake is stocked with bluegill, redear sunfish, largemouth bass, channel catfish and crappie.

The campground, located on the west side of the park, has 51 sites with electricity, 11 of those also have direct water hook-up, and 10 primitive sites. Shower houses, restrooms and a dump station are also available to campers. The camping season begins in late April and goes on until mid-October every year.

Three picnic shelters on the parkland each hold 200 people and are available for year-round rentals. A large playground is near the Dogwood Shelter. The park has a fully accessible 1,850-foot trail that leads down to a wildlife observation shelter that overlooks the J.I. Wetlands.

The levee for the J.I. Case Wetlands was constructed in 1984. The lake was filled during early 1985 and a boat launch was added after. The primary purpose for the lake was for waterfowl management with fishing designated as a secondary use. The lake attracts migratory birds in the fall and provides excellent fishing opportunities, especially in the spring. The lake is stocked with bluegill, redear sunfish, largemouth bass, channel catfish, black crappie, yellow bullheads and warmouth. The 23.5-acre area owned by the Department, east of Hunt Road and across from J.I. Case Wetlands has been left in its natural state and serves as a wildlife nesting area.

As a multi-purpose park, Hawthorn attracts a wide variety of visitors from all walks of life. They include campers, fisherman and runners who utilize the natural resources. There are many groups, like businesses and organizations, schools, reunions, churches and Scouts that rent the facilities for events along with plenty of individuals seeking a serene atmosphere.

The layout of the roads and trails at Hawthorn Park is especially conducive to joggers and runners. The Terre Haute triathlon, a Tri-Fed sanctioned event, is held annually at

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the park and entices sports enthusiasts from all over the United States. The Wabash Valley Road Runners sponsor their runs in the park each year.

### Prairie Creek Park

Located at 3230 W. French Dr., Terre Haute, IN 47802. Prairie Creek Park was added to the Vigo County Parks system in 1972. The land, 107.25 acres, located in Prairie Creek Township in the southern end of the county, was acquired from the Prairie Creek Conservancy District. The park was named after Prairie Creek which flows through the township. The Parks and Recreation Department shares an adjacent Public Law 566 flood control lake with private landowners to the northwest. In 1983, Ruth Newlin deeded 8 more acres to the west of the park. Prairie Creek Park grew to 202.75 acres in 1997, when the park purchased 87.5 acres of land to the east from Karolyn Logan. In January 2000 an additional 80 acres of land located north, across the road from the park, was purchased from Arlen Elliott, extending Prairie Creek Park to 282.725 acres.

Situated on West French Drive, Prairie Creek Park is four miles west of U.S. 41 and on and six-tenths miles east of State Road 63, making it accessible from either highway. It is a multipurpose park, and its distinctive feature is a beautiful grove of old growth sugar maple trees that turn brilliant golden yellow, red and orange in the fall.

Within the park there are multiple trails with multiple access points. A small family graveyard sits on a hilltop, undisturbed in the woods on the east side of the park. Members of the Kerchieval family rest in peace at the very old site.

On the south border, Prairie Creek Park adjoins a lake. At the front of the park is a small pond. Channel catfish, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, bluegill and black crappie are found in both bodies of water.

The campground has 40 sites with electricity, 14 also having direct water hook-up, and two primitive sites. The campground is divided into two sections with the direct water hook-up sites in one smaller section, just electric sites in the other section. A shower house, restrooms and dump station are also available to campers. The camping season begins in early April and ends in early November every year.

Two picnic shelters on the parkland each seat 80 people comfortably and are available for rentals year-round. A large playground is adjacent to the Maple Shelter. Across from the Maple Shelter is a ball field with a backstop. Centered between the campground and

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the shelters is a multipurpose court with pickleball courts and basketball goals that attract enthusiasts of both sports. Nearby are horseshoe pits and around the park is a new disc golf course.

Elliot Woods, located adjacent to Prairie Creek Park north of West French Drive, is a unique woodland. Its canopy of trees has all but eliminated under-story growth making visibility good for woodland recreational activities. At least 26 species of trees, 11 varieties of flowers and 9 species of wildlife have been recorded. Elliot Woods trail, a 1.5-mile trail that winds through the property, was completed in 2009. Parking and access to the Elliott Woods Trail are in Prairie Creek Park.

### Bicentennial Park: Dewey Point and Wabashiki State Fish and Wildlife Area

Located at 110 E. National Ave., West Terre Haute, IN 47885. In 2009, Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department partnered with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to purchase over 800 acres of Wabash River bottomland with the support of an Indiana Heritage Trust grant. The 800-acre plot is directly across the river from the City of Terre Haute. The land extends south of U.S. 40 and continues just south of I-70. Previous usage of the property was for agricultural purposes. In 2007, the previous owners signed a perpetual easement with the IUSDA Wetland Reserve Program. The purchase of this bottomland was to provide recreational opportunities for the citizens of Vigo County and a natural habitat for native and migratory wildlife. IDNR intends to expand the acreage to potentially 7,100 acres. This area has been named the Wabashiki State Fish and Wildlife Area.

In 2015, Dewey Point opened featuring a new shelter with wildlife viewing stations, a restroom and parking facility. This property, donated by Susan Dewey, has helped make this area a birding destination with a beautiful trailhead and viewing platform for many species. A trail was installed that looped through Wabashiki Fish and Wildlife Area. The trailhead and wildlife area are encompassed in Bicentennial Park, an area developed along with RiverSCAPE, the Vigo County Commissioners, Duke Energy, landowners and other partners.

This passive park was started a decade ago with property acquisition and continues to develop today. In September of 2023 a new parking lot, trailhead along the river and a 0.6-mile paved trail extending from the new connector trail off Old U.S. 40 and connecting

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to the river was completed and opened to the public. Over \$400,000 in land acquisition is slated for this area to expand Bicentennial Park. The park will continue to grow and come to fruition, but the vision will continue to be a river walk and passive recreation. South 7<sup>th</sup> Street Park just adjacent was given to the West Terre Haute Parks Department, a newly formed board.

### R.Kermit Flesher Memorial State Nature Preserve

Located at Little Road, Terre Haute, IN 47802. R. Kermit Flesher Memorial State Nature Preserve is a unique flood plain forest in the bottom land of Prairie Creek Township, just west of the little town of Hutton, not far from the Wabash River. The 36-acre parcel is rectangular in shape and surrounded by agricultural land.

The land was deeded to the Park Board in January 1972, by relatives of Richard Kermit Flesher, who died in April 1971. The family asked that the forest, better known as “Flesher Woods,” be left in its natural state as nearly as possible, with the exception of educational trails, to preserve all plants and wildlife.

In April 1984, the Parks and Recreation Department dedicated Flesher Woods to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Thereupon, the woods became a state nature preserve with the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department as its administrator, to manage and protect.

Silver maple, green ash, swamp white oak, shagbark, shellbark hickory, and other flood plain species dominate Flesher Woods. In addition, an impressive number of pecan trees and other trees primarily restricted to southwest Indiana, such as the overcup oak, are located in the woods. Swamp buttercup, which produces yellow flowers in the spring, covers much of the forest floor. Flesher Woods is one of the few remaining high quality flood plain forests remaining in southwest Indiana.

The area has no trails or other visitor facilities. Access is allowed only by permission of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department. Flood water and mosquitoes are problematic. Otherwise, this woodland area offers excellent nature study.

### Lee Fields Park

Located at 2430 Bentine Ln., West Terre Haute, IN 47885. Lee fields Park, 7.88 acres, is a neighborhood park located on Ferguson Hill in Sugar Creek Township off U.S. Highway



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150. The land had once been the playground of the old Concannon High School and was deeded to the Park Board in April 1975, by the Vigo County School Corporation. The park was named Lee Fields in honor of a West Terre Haute businessman and Rotarian who had spent many years developing recreational facilities and programs for young people in the area.

The park has a small playground, a multipurpose court with basketball goals, a softball field with a back stop, an open field, a picnic shelter, and a wooded area. As no restrooms are available in this park, a stone water fountain was installed especially for those individuals participating in sports. Lee Fields Park is used mainly by neighborhood children and families, local school baseball and football teams for practice and joggers.

### George and Ida Smith Park (Prairieiton Park)

Located at 3784 Hotel St., Terre Haute, IN 47802. George and Ida Smith Park is located on State Road 63 in the town of Prairieiton in Prairieiton Township. The five-tenths of an acre park was donated in December 1976, to the Park Board by Virginia Phelps in memory of her parents George and Ida Smith.

The park is a small neighborhood park that has a small playground and a basketball court. Children are often visible playing in the area.

### Markle Mill Park

Located at 4905 N. Mill Dam Road, Terre Haute, IN 47805. Markle Mill Park is on Mill Dam Road on Otter Creek in northern Vigo County. The eight-acre parcel of land was quitclaim deeded to Vigo County on July 27, 1999, by Hulman & Company. It was then quitclaim deeded to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department by the Vigo County Commissioners in November 2023. In 1816, Colonel Abraham Markle constructed a dam over Otter Creek and built a grist-sawmill. At one time a distillery sat on the site. Only the dam and remnants of the mill foundation remain. The site is a registered historic landmark. The Hulman-George family wanted the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to care for this historic property for the community before they took possession of the land.

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Much has been written and is available on the history of the site. According to history enthusiasts, the mill was the longest operating gristmill east of the Mississippi River. Many stories surround the mill, including one that it was part of the underground railroad. The park attracts the public due to its historic significance and the creek running through the park. A gazebo, picnic tables and a grill are available to visitors. The esthetic qualities of the park draw in fishermen, lunch hour clientele, history enthusiasts, neighbors and individuals seeking a quiet place. The dam was removed in 2023, leaving the historic foundation and 2 wing walls. Park improvements were made such as parking, additional play equipment, and plantings.

### Griffin Bike Park

Located at 10700 Bono Rd., Terre Haute, IN 47802. The Griffin Bike Park, named after Sgt. Dale Griffin, who gave his life in service in Afghanistan was opened in 2016. Built on the grounds of what was formerly known as the Fowler Park Wilderness Area, this 300-acre park has been supported through the efforts of many volunteers and local businesses. Drawing visitors from all around the country, it has grown to include over 32 miles of trails. This park has features that cater to all skill sets for riders, from beginners to pro. The park includes 32 miles of cross-country trail, 18 X-Games style dirt jumps, a pump track, exclusive beginner areas, a dual slalom course, a terrain park, a lake jump, two floating trails and a newly developed 4-mile trail designed with adaptive equipment in mind.

Griffin Bike Park hosts numerous races each year including standard cross-country races, endurance events, dual slalom and pump track series, short track races and trail runs. Multi-day skills clinics festivals and youth programming are also offered throughout the year.

### Ruble Park

Located at 411 E. Dallas Dr., Terre Haute, IN 47802. In 2014 The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department acquired this 822-acre parcel, and it was opened to the public in April of 2022. Keith Ruble played a key part in the acquisition of this property. The property runs north of Dallas, East of Trueblood, West of Carlisle and south of Curry Dr. This property was once used as a buffer between businesses and residential. Currently

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Ruble Park offers 11 miles of natural hiking trails through grasslands and forests while offering hikers chances for wildlife and bird viewing. Environmental caps continue to be maintained on a rotation of mowing and burning. These areas have been kept free of woody vegetation.

### **Current Programs**

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department offers a diverse array of programs that attracts many kinds of visitors. The Department responded to the community's needs by providing programs like mountain bike races at Griffin Bike Park, youth camps, nature programming, family activities and historical reenactments. The following is a snapshot of some of the activities that have been offered by the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department staff, volunteers or with our partners:

- Pioneer Days
- Christmas Walk
- Movie in the Park
- Summer in the Village
- Pancake Breakfast
- Griffin Bike Park races
- Griffin Bike Park Camp
- Youth Adventure Camp
- Hawthorn Hayrides
- Fowler Park After Dark
- Fowler Park Hayrides
- Kids and family hikes

### **Budget**

The annual Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department budget is developed by the Superintendent with input from staff. The budget is approved by the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board prior to being submitted to the Vigo County Council. The Vigo County Council reviews and approves the budget. Budget hearings are held annually in September. The budget and proposed tax rate are submitted to the State Board of Tax Commissioners to review and make changes if needed. The State Board of Tax

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Commissioners issues an order on the budget in time to allow for its appropriation for the following year.

The following operating fund budgets were approved for the years 2014 through 2024:

Year	Budget
2014	\$1,155,338.00
2015	\$1,176,053.00
2016	\$1,250,366.00
2017	\$1,269,459.00
2018	\$1,256,003.00
2019	\$1,272,360.00
2020	\$1,311,642.00
2021	\$1,368,995.00
2022	\$1,401,335.00
2023	\$1,406,810.00
2024	\$1,596,300.00

**Table 1: VCPRD Budget**

Wabash Valley Community Foundation

The Wabash Valley Community Foundation currently manages several funds generated through donations and grants for the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department.

The funds include:

Endowment Fund

Projects Fund

The Wabash Valley Community Foundation was founded in 1991 to build the Valley's philanthropic resources. They encourage people to create permanently endowed funds that support charitable opportunities throughout Vigo County's communities now and forever. The staff members, along with board members and volunteers, work together to assure donors achieve their charitable goals. The Community Foundation assists individuals in matching their charitable interests with the communities' needs. The

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Wabash Valley Community Foundation informs and engages people and organizations in supporting their communities.

### Contact

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## Natural Features and Landscape

### Topography

Before continental ice sheets covered Vigo County, it was a rugged, hilly area. The last three ice ages, the Kansan, Illinois and Wisconsin, brought many changes. The entire county was covered by boulders and pebbles in the clay matrix called glacial till. The combined deposits left by these glaciers are as much as 150 feet in thickness. These deposits make up virtually all the surface features of Vigo County.

Presently, the county's topography falls into three divisions: river valleys, upland and till plain. The most prominent feature of the river valleys is the Wabash River Valley, which extends through the entire county and covers about one fourth of Vigo County. The flood plains of the Wabash River occupy 11% of the county and average approximately 20 feet above the low level of the river. Terraces rise from 50 to 75 feet above the river but merge into the flood plain in the county's southern part. The City of Terre Haute is on such a terrace. East and west of the Wabash River extensive dissected and leached uplands formed from the Illinois ice sheet occupies about 55% of the area outside of the river and terrace area. These uplands have an elevation which averages about 150 feet above the Wabash River. The level plains are in the northwestern part of the county and comprise about 50 square miles. Within 415 square miles of the county, the elevation ranges from 450 feet and 600 feet.

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### **Soils**

Vigo County has eight different types of soil that make up the land. Soil associations and a general soil map of the county have been compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. Knowing these soils, their abilities and limitations gives the department an edge in planning for open space, facilities, recreational activities and conservation efforts. Rain gardens are used in places where soil is prone to being washed away, an example resides in Fowler Park and should be installed in like areas. Another way VCPRD uses soil knowledge to improve parks is drainage, and if soil will drain. Several areas at Ruble Park were built on soil that would not drain using techniques to slope water away. VCPRD has a laser level that assists in drainage projects. Erosion continues at the gatehouse at Fowler Park, this area needs to be hard armored to protect the slope and likewise other areas in the park system.

### **Forest and Vegetation Resources**

Vigo County Parks have many forested areas, and on average less open space available. The VCPRD has been working diligently through volunteers and park resources to perform timber stand improvement. This varies per park and the need, but centers mainly on honeysuckle and vine removal. The honeysuckle in our parks is very dense, preventing future tree growth. Prairie Creek Park has been an emphasis in the last couple years, it can still more easily be controlled. The department has purchased equipment such as a forestry mower to help with this cause.

The Vigo County Parks also has 188 acres of Prairie. These are managed on a rotating basis, mowing burning, and performing invasive removal. Many of these acres are in environmentally sensitive areas, so extra care and steps are needed to ensure the success of the plantings.

A project to save some ash trees within the parks was initiated in 2013, treating ash with the arbor jet method. This was done a second round 2-3 years after the first, then follow up treatment as needed.

Vigo County Parks has many areas of forest, but those were hit hard by a storm in June 2023, then again in June 2024. Clean-up took months to clear debris. The canopy is still healthy after these storms due to the many trees in proximity

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to our park gathering areas. In 2024 a drought continued from 2023. It is probable that we will again lose several poplar and other susceptible trees due to this. Those will be monitored and removed as needed.

### **Natural Resource Management**

Several measures are being taken to manage the resources in Vigo County parkland. The Vigo County Health Department sprays all park roadways for mosquitoes in season. VCPRD also traps animals like muskrat, racoon, and groundhog to protect parkland and structures. Goose management is an always present operation. VCPRD has addled eggs in the past, but that seems to be fairly in-effective. Instead, when needed, animal control is called out to round up geese from nuisance areas. E.Coli levels have not recently been an issue at our swimming facility, but goose fecal matter is an issue in areas where they congregate.

### **Water**

The tributary streams of the Wabash River flow easterly and westerly with a trend toward the south. The southerly dip of the county's substrate not only causes a southerly trend in the direction of stream movement but also causes them to crowd their southern banks. The south branch of Honey Creek is the only stream of any size flowing toward the north. The greater portion of the surface of the county slopes toward the Wabash River, but portions of Riley and Pierson Townships are in the valley of the Eel River. The major tributaries of the Wabash River include Otter Creek, Lost Creek, Honey Creek, Prairie Creek, Coal Creek, Sugar Creek and Clear Creek

### **Climate**

Vigo County's climate is humid continental. It is influenced by the interaction of warm air masses from the Gulf of Mexico and cool, dry Canadian air masses. As a result, weather conditions are changeable. Temperatures rarely fall below 0 F in the winter; the mean annual temperature in 2014 was 54.25 F.

### **Agricultural Activity**

Much of the county is on uplands and ranges from large, nearly level areas to very steep, broken land. Many areas along the bottom are subject to flooding by the Wabash River.

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About two thirds of the acreage in Vigo County is used for crops and cropland. Cash grain farming is the major farming enterprise in the county, but general farming is still important. Livestock and livestock products are the major sources of farm income on the general farms. Presently, 500 acres of farmland is lost each year, mostly due to poor economy and development.

### **Land Availability/ Interest**

Properties along the Wabash River, near Bicentennial Park and the Wabashiki Trail connection are of interest to the Department. This area continues to be a suitable opportunity for partnerships and to complete scenic trail connections near the Wabash River watershed.

## **Man-made, Historical and Cultural**

### **Pioneer Village at Fowler Park**

Pioneer Village is the center attraction of several events and programs held annually at the park. The Village Folk, a volunteer group, brings the village alive for the annual Summer in the Village, Mini Pioneer Days, Pioneer Days and Christmas Walk events. Visitors come from the local area as well as from all over the United States and foreign countries. Thousands of people attend each event. In a joint educational effort, the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department and the Vigo County School Corporation co-sponsor Mini Pioneer Days each October. All fourth-grade students in Vigo County participate. Park staff, school personnel and community volunteers work together to take the students back in time to teach them about Indiana history during Pioneer times.

The Blacksmith Shop in the village is open every third Saturday, May through October, for the public to take Intro to Blacksmithing classes led by two of our skilled volunteer blacksmiths. The Pioneer Village is also open to the public for walk-through tours every third Saturday of the month during the summer. The Summer in the Village is an opportunity for those interested in learning about pioneer life, trades, skills, cabins, etc. Tours are given to individuals and groups year-round upon request. The village is frequently the scene of weddings and



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family photos; couples and families choose the church, gristmill or Irishman's covered bridge for their backdrop.

In 1990, the nonprofit organization, Fowler Park Village Folk, was integrated to assist the Parks Department with tours and reenactments/ staffing for special events. Money raised by this group of volunteers is used solely for educational projects, capital improvements and repairs, acquisitions and historic preservation of the pioneer village.

Many structures in the pioneer village were in dis-repair a decade ago. Many resources have been allocated from EDIT, parks funding, and donations totaling over \$200,000 to put on new roofs, replace logs, and perform preventative maintenance. On the heels of these improvements VCPRD was awarded an endowment assigned to help with the Pioneer Village amount in approx. \$12,000 annually.

The Laura's Cabin was re-roofed in 2024, even with most of the effort being volunteer and in house, the roofing material cost was \$4,000. Looking into 2025, the Dogtrot Cabin will be roofed with hand-split cedar shakes, which is estimated at \$5,000 if done in-house.

In 2025 crack sealing will be done in all parks. All roads have either been paved or micro-sealed in the past few years. This has all been hired out as well as stripping due to the time constraints of staff and the cost.

A new trail will be built in Bicentennial Park in 2025 connecting the existing pedestrian walkway with the Wabashiki Trail. There will also be a shelter built in that park. In Bicentennial Park, many updates have been made in 2024-2025. VCPRD acquired AMVETS in early 2025 and will pursue options for that building. A football field is being built next to the building for the West Terre Haute Little League, and many more lots were purchased in the park boundary.

Fowler Park in 2025 will receive a new playground tailored more to younger children, per many requests from the public.

Griffin Bike Park will get a new building in 2025, housing a vendor and office space for our Bike Park Manager, along with programming space.

Also coming in 2025 and beyond, a connection from the Riley Spur to trails at Rea Park and also connecting with an up-and-coming park in Riley, the Riley

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Lock. Much more communication between city, county, state, and other outside organization has taken place to connect parks and communities.

### **Markle Mill at Markle Park**

In 1816, Colonel Abraham Markle constructed a dam over Otter Creek and built a grist-sawmill. At one time a distillery also sat on the site. Markle Mill was the longest operating gristmill east of the Mississippi River. Only the dam and remnants of the mill foundation remain after the mill burnt down in a fire in 1938. The site is officially registered as a historic landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. The Hulman-George family wanted the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to serve as a caretaker of this historic property for the community's benefit until the Department took possession of it.

### **Sugar Camp at Prairie Creek Park**

Prairie Creek is best known for its Sugar Camp. In late January to early March every year maple trees are tapped within the park. The sap is collected and routed using plastic tubing and a pump system to a holding tank next to the Sugar Cabin. The Sugar Cabin is an authentic log cabin with evaporating equipment used to produce maple syrup. As maple syrup is produced, it is filtered, bottled and made available for the public to purchase. The Sugar Cabin is open to visitors anytime enough sap is available to fire the evaporator to boil sap.

### **Kenneth E. Smith Memorial Labyrinth at Hawthorn Park**

The Kenneth E. Smith Memorial Labyrinth is in Hawthorn Park adjacent to the Dogwood Shelter. The labyrinth, completed in 2003, is an 80-foot diameter circle constructed out of aggregate mix concrete. It is patterned after the labyrinth that was laid on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France around 1220 A.D. The singular path is switchback, turning and twisting to encourage walkers to concentrate as they make their way forward to the middle of the labyrinth and back again. There are 34 turns on the path going to the center. The path allows wheelchairs or walkers to be used. A meditation garden surrounds the labyrinth. A comfortable swing, benches, a babbling water fountain, rose

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bushes, trees and shrubs create a quiet space and blend into the park. For many years following installation, the garden was maintained by the Wabash Valley Master Gardeners.

The labyrinth has been found in all traditions throughout history in various forms worldwide. It is an ancient therapeutic tool that has been rediscovered and is growing in popularity, being built at hospitals, schools, parks and on private properties. Unlike the maze, the labyrinth has only one path so there are no tricks and no dead ends. Labyrinths have served as spaces for meditation, rituals, community celebrations, gatherings, children's games and holistic problem-solving devices. The labyrinth went through renovations in 2018 with new concrete, a new water feature and in 2019, upgrades to the area surrounding the labyrinth.

The labyrinth and garden are designed for all ages. For older users, it can help relieve stress and provide a place for meditation. Children simply enjoy the challenge of staying within the boundaries of the path. Mrs. Lavern Smith donated a major part of the funding for this project in memory of her late husband, Kenneth E. Smith, who died in May 2000.

### **Transportation Links**

Vigo County is in west central Indiana. It is 507 feet above sea level at latitude 39'28" N and longitude 87'24" W. It is bordered by Parke and Vermillion Counties to the north, Clay County to the east, Sullivan County to the south and the state of Illinois to the west. Vigo, Clay and Vermillion Counties comprise the Terre Haute Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The county has four incorporated areas: the city of Terre Haute and the towns of West Terre Haute, Seelyville and Riley. The city of Terre Haute serves as the county seat.

Interstate 70 east-west, U.S. 40 and 150 east-west, U.S. 41 north-south, Indiana 46 east-west and Indiana 63 north-south provide easy access to and from Vigo County.

Metropolitan cities within a 180-mile radius of Vigo County are: Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Evansville, IN; Indianapolis, IN; and St. Louis, MO.

### **Vigo County History**

Four national flags, Spanish, French, English, and American, have flown over the land now known as Vigo County. If the Miami Indians had had a flag, there would

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have been five. The village of the Wea Indians, members of the Miami Indian confederation, were situated on the high bank of the Wabash, where the Old Indian Orchard was once located. The village was called Quitateno, pronounced Weauteno, meaning Rising Sun. Trappers, traders and explorers crisscrossed the area. They found one-fifth of the area in luxuriant prairie grass. Little blue stem thrived on the upland soil while the tall blue stem preferred the wetland soil. The rest of the terrain was covered with miles of dense forests and numerous waterways. Deer, buffalo, wild turkeys and waterfowl were present in abundance making it an ideal hunting ground.

Vigo County is in the heart of the original tract of land called the Northwest Territory. On May 7, 1800, Indiana Territory was set out as a separate Territory by an Act of Congress. William Henry Harrison was named Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs. His task was to secure more land and provide room for the tide of white settlers that would soon arrive. Tecumseh appealed to Governor Harrison on two occasions to repudiate the 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne and restore the land to the Indians, threatening to have the chiefs that sold the land put to death. Tecumseh said, "...the Great Spirit ordered us to come here, and we shall stay." Harrison explained that the U.S. had always tried to deal justly with the Indians, but the land could not be returned to them.

In 1811, fearful that Tecumseh was going to excite the Indians of the region against the U.S., Governor Harrison led an expedition up the Wabash to confront the hostile Indians under Tecumseh's leadership. Sixty-five miles from Vincennes, he selected the site of Fort Harrison which was built immediately. The spot was on high ground on the east bank of the river, a short distance above the present site of the City of Terre Haute. Later, Captain Zachary Taylor defended the stockade against an attack of marauding Indians. Out of the events at Fort Harrison emerged two presidents - William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor. Fort Harrison, henceforth, provided protection for anyone traveling or settling in the area.

The lands of Vigo County were surveyed by Deputy Surveyors, William Harris and Arthur Henrie in the years 1814-1816. A public sale was held at the Vincennes land office on September 13 and 14, 1816. The official plat for Terre

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Haute was filed and recorded on October 25, 1816, just nine months after Indiana had been admitted to the union. The word “Terre Haute,” derived from the French “terre” land, and “haute” high, signifies high land. Early explorers gave the land this name as it was the only high ground approaching the river for several miles. Settlement of the territory, in and around Terre Haute, was rapid due to the fertility of the rich soil. Often, crops were planted and raised long before a cabin was built to shelter the settler.

Vigo County, including what is now Parke County, was formed by an act of the Legislature at the first state capitol at Corydon, Indiana, on January 21, 1818. Vigo County had been a portion of Sullivan County, which had previously been a portion of Knox County, which included the region now known as Indiana and Michigan.

The county was named after Colonel Francis Vigo, an Italian turned Spanish soldier turned successful American trapper and trader in the Mississippi and Wabash River Valleys turned Revolutionary War spy. Vigo proved valuable in dealing with the Indians and arbitrated disputes between the whites and Indians. In 1802, he was a delegate to the Indiana Territory Convention. In his will Vigo designated that \$500.00 be spent on a bell for the courthouse in the county that was his namesake. The sound of that bell can be heard today.

As an inducement to locate the county seat in Terre Haute, the proprietors deeded over 80 lots and the public square to the county and paid \$4,000.00 into the county treasury. On March 21, 1818, the Commissioners, appointed for that purpose, selected Terre Haute as the seat of justice for Vigo County. Its professional bench and bar extended over many counties.

Vigo County became a focal point for commerce and travel in western Indiana. It was noted for its rapid development in agricultural, manufacturing and banking lines. The Wabash River became the main artery for travel and trade. It saved the settlers from stagnation and isolation. Its channels stimulated business and established the foundation for growth. The Old National Road, now U.S. 40, cemented the path of development. It was the “Gateway to the West.” The Old Indian Orchard and the woods and prairies gave way to fields and fences,

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houses and barns, bridges and railroads, and mills and factories. This spelled the beginning of the evolution of present Vigo County.

### **Vigo County Parks Department History**

1961

In February, the Indiana Advisory Committee on Recreation completed a study of recreation in Vigo County, Indiana, to determine the adequacy of programs being conducted for Vigo County citizens. This study was part of a statewide survey of all counties to develop a state recreational blueprint. The Citizens Recreation Committee, composed of representatives from more than thirty civic, service, labor, and governmental units, was organized in March to study the Park and Recreation Act of 1955, which gave authority to the county to establish a county Park Board.

In response to the immediate interest of the local citizens to the problems of recreation, the report of the committee was released by James R. Champlin, Recreation Consultant and Secretary of Governor Welsh's Advisory Committee, to the city of Terre Haute at a public meeting on April 12. Summarized, the recommendations of the committee were:

1. The civil city, county government, Vigo County School Corporation, and Indiana State Teachers College cooperate in organizing a countywide Park and Recreation Department with a Superintendent of Parks and Recreation;
2. A master plan be developed for the orderly acquisition, development, and operation of park and recreation facilities;
3. A broad, balanced program be developed to meet the needs and interests of all citizens of the community;
4. The community embrace the school-community concept of recreation and work cooperatively;

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5. The program be adequately funded for a quality program to exist.

Following the meeting, H.E.L.P. (Housewives' Effort for Local Progress), the Citizens Recreation Committee, the area Chamber of Commerce, Vigo County Extension Service, and several interested citizens worked diligently to persuade the county leaders to establish the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department.

1965

On November 5, the Vigo County Council adopted Park and Recreation Ordinance No. 1 establishing the Vigo County Department of Park and Recreation, repealing all ordinances in conflict therewith. The ordinance was passed by a vote of four to two. Supporting the ordinance was: John W. Brentlinger, Stanley Cooper, David T. Reed, and Everett Branam, President.

On December 13, Circuit Court Judge H. Ralph Johnston appointed Maynard Neimeyer, Jack Wood, Spoke Hazen, and Mrs. R. L. Winklepeck to the first Park Board. Serving as an ex-officio member was John D. Zerr of the Vigo County Cooperative Extension Service.

1966

The first Park Board meeting was held on January 25. The meeting was chaired by Dick Molby of the Indiana State Conservation Department of Natural Resources. Officers elected were: Maynard Neimeyer, Chairman; Jack Wood, Vice Chairman; and Maxine Winklepeck, Secretary. Dick Molby stressed the need for the formation of a county park system comprehensive plan to be eligible for matching funds under Public Law #566 and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964.

A public meeting was held on March 8 to obtain input from local citizens. At that time, a pioneer village for historical education and a greenhouse for botany and ecological studies were mentioned as areas the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department could meet local educational needs.

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In October, the Park Board hired Paul N. Funkhouser to draw up a Vigo County Park and Recreation Supplement, subject to approval of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. Bill Beach, from the Purdue Extension Service, was instrumental in gathering data for the supplement as well as the final Master Plan in November 1967.

1967

Richard Norris was appointed as the first Superintendent of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department at the March Park Board meeting. He assumed duties on April 1.

On June 27, the first acquisition of property took place at a special Park Board meeting held at Bohannon's Restaurant when the Park Board signed an agreement with the County Commissioners for county property owned in Linton Township. Harry Brentlinger, County Commissioner, was instrumental in obtaining 140 acres of land from the Peabody Coal Company for park use. The quitclaim deed was signed on August 3. Twenty days later, the land was named Fowler Park in memory of Captain Eugene Fowler, the first man from Vigo County to lose his life in the Vietnam War. Fowler Park was developed as a multipurpose park with camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, boating, playground, picnic shelters, and a pioneer village.

1969

Upon the resignation of Richard Norris, David V. Beres was named Superintendent of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department in September 1969.

The children of Dan and Iva Wood donated a log cabin, constructed prior to 1830, to the Park and Recreation Department.

1970



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The cabin donated by the children of Dan and Iva Wood was reconstructed at Fowler Park by the American Federation of Teachers, Local 734. The original intent was for the cabin to be a gatehouse; however, its possibilities as an educational tool became evident, and it gave birth to the present-day Pioneer Village.

The “little red schoolhouse”, built in 1888 in New Goshen in Fayette Township, was deeded to the Park and Recreation Department by the Vigo County School Corporation on April 27, as a historical building for educational tours and community meetings. The building was restored, and a small play area was established in 1973 near the school. Lack of use of the property by local citizens resulted in its transfer to the Fayette Township Trustee in 1987.

The Park Board purchased a house and 2.52 acres of land adjacent to Fowler Park from the Whitlock family in December. The house became the residence of the Fowler Park caretaker.

1972

After the establishment of Fowler Park 1972 Master Plan, and mentioned previously in the 1968 Master Plan, the Department was interested in developing three more major parks. They were to be in the southwest, northeast, and northwest portions of Vigo County.

On January 7, a deed to 36 acres of woods located in the bottom land of Prairie Creek Township, just west of Hutton, was presented to the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board by relatives in memory of Richard Kermit Flesher who died in April 1971. At the January 17 Park Board meeting, the tract of land was officially named the R. Kermit Flesher Memorial Woods, better known as Flesher Woods.

In July, the Park Board acquired 107.25 acres of land in Prairie Creek Township from the Prairie Creek Conservancy District. This land was named Prairie Creek Park and developed as a multipurpose park like Fowler Park with camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, boating, playground, picnic shelters, and a sugar

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cabin. The numerous maple trees rooted on this land would eventually lend themselves to the beginning of the production of maple syrup, the major attraction at this park. Eventually, low attendance and poor water quality resulted in the discontinuation of swimming. Prairie Creek Park is the major park in the southwest portion of Vigo County.

Glenn Recreation Center was quitclaim deeded to the Park Board in November by the Vigo County School Corporation. The center was a recreational facility for the county's northeast area. In 1978, the center was deeded to the Lost Creek Township Trustee. It had become a financial drain; the Park and Recreation Department could no longer afford the repairs or an adequate staff.

1973

Keith Ruble replaced David Beres as Superintendent of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department in March.

1974

In November, one acre of property on South 7th Street in West Terre Haute was deeded to the Park Board by the Town of West Terre Haute for use as a neighborhood park. That park was named South 7th Street Park.

1975

In April, a second neighborhood park was established farther north in West Terre Haute when 7.88 acres of land, once the playground of Concannon High School, was deeded to the Park Board by the Vigo County School Corporation. This park was named Lee Fields in honor of a West Terre Haute businessman and Rotarian who spent many years developing recreational facilities and programs for young people in the area.

1976

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The third neighborhood park was established in Prairieton in December. One-half acre of land was donated for use as a park by Virginia Phelps in memory of her parents. The park was named the George and Ida Smith Park.

1980

In August, a major park in the northeast portion of Vigo County became a reality. The Park Board purchased 233.22 acres of land in Lost Creek Township, 206.55 acres from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and 26.67 acres from Herbert and Lorene Moss. It was named Hawthorn Park after the many Hawthorn trees located in the park. The caretaker's home and maintenance shops were also located on the Moss property.

1981

Through the efforts of Superintendent Keith Ruble, Commissioner John Scott, and Lester Shepherd, an active leader in the Boy Scouts of America and former Peabody Coal Company administrator, approximately 300 acres of land across the road from Fowler Park were donated to the Park Board by the Wabash Valley Boy Scout Council with the consent of the Peabody Coal Company to whom the land would have reverted when the Boy Scouts gave up ownership. It became known as the Fowler Park Wilderness Area. This area having eight various sized lakes is a wilderness area for hiking, back-pack camping, horseback riding, and fishing.

1982

Vigo County Council passed an amendment to Ordinance No. 1, dated November 5, 1965, as authorized by Indiana Code 36-10- 3, on October 26. This re-established the Vigo County Park and Recreation Board.

1983

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On October 13, about eight acres adjacent west of Prairie Creek Park was deeded to the Park Board by Ruth Newlin. Prairie Creek Park expanded to 115.25 acres.

1984

In February, the Park Board approved the dedication of Flesher Woods as a State Nature Preserve under provisions of the Indiana Nature Preserves Act of 1967 (IC 14-4-5). The Articles of Dedication and Master Plan were signed on April 4, by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Nature Preserves.

1985

The Vigo County Commissioners deeded approximately 23.5 acres, across the road from the J. I. Case Wetland Wildlife Refuge to the Park Board in April. The land was left in its natural state for additional wildlife nesting. With this addition, Hawthorn Park expanded to 256.72 acres. The Vigo County Council voted to restrict the purchase of new properties for a major park in the northwest area of Vigo County, leaving this as the only region without a major county park as previously planned.

1990

A mobile home was purchased for use as the Prairie Creek Park caretaker's residence. New playground equipment was installed at Lee Fields, South 7th Street, and at George & Ida Smith Park. A fully accessible trail to accommodate persons of all abilities was laid in Hawthorn Park. The addition of two repeaters and portable radios for each staff member significantly improved communications within the Park and Recreation Department.

1991

An observation tower overlooking J. I. Case Wetland Wildlife Refuge was built adjacent to the fully accessible trail in Hawthorn Park. At Fowler Park, a gristmill

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was completed in the Fowler Park Pioneer Village and put into operation in time for Pioneer Days.

1994

Fowler Park expanded to 462.82 acres upon the purchase of 20.3 acres of land to the north from Ray and Emma Lou Deckelmeier, a longtime friend of Keith Ruble, on January 6. The Terre Haute Convention and Visitors Bureau donated the monies for the acquisition of the land to encourage tourism at Fowler Park. The same year, the Park and Recreation Department took advantage of the opportunity to hook Fowler Park onto the city water line as the county was extending the water line to the Industrial Park also located in the southern part of the county. Maple Shelter at Prairie Creek Park was relocated from the back of the park to the front, centralizing it next to the ball diamond, a playground, and restroom facilities. Major playgrounds at Fowler, Hawthorn, and Prairie Creek Parks were torn down and replaced with modern, fully accessible equipment.

1995

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 841 cleared land in the Fowler Park Wilderness Area for two parking lots. Pioneer Days' increasing attendance demanded more space be available to accommodate the crowd.

1996

The purchase of Deckelmeier land led to a major renovation of Fowler Park that began in the previous fall and continued throughout the year. The entrance to the park was moved to Oregon Church Road on the south side of the park, and a log gatehouse was added. The additional property provided the space needed for the expansion of Pioneer Village to the north and additional parking facilities. The log barn was enlarged to twice its size, and a gift shop was added above the meeting room facilities. A second large shelter was built on the west side of the park to replace the small one. The boat launch was relocated to the southwest side of the lake.

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1997

In August, Prairie Creek Park expanded 87.5 acres to the east with the purchase of undeveloped land from Karolyn Logan. The area has a rolling topography with unique geological features. The park department had been leasing the property to tap maple trees. This addition of land brought the total acreage of Prairie Creek Park to 202.75 acres. At Fowler Park, an accessible trail was added to the Pioneer Village. The Vigo County Park and Recreation Department adopted the department's "Employee and Management Handbook". Policies and practices of the county were adjusted to meet the special needs of the Park and Recreation Department.

1998

Vast problems existed due to an overabundance of geese in the parks, leading to Geese Harvests at Fowler and Hawthorn Parks. Fecal materials were adversely affecting water quality and recreational areas, creating a health hazard throughout the park system. Harvesting was a controversial issue and was given much thought before the decision to proceed was made. Geese had been captured the two previous years and transported to southern Indiana. Goose eggs had been added with the state's permission. Neither of these procedures reduced the goose population. With the State no longer able to transport geese, harvesting was the next logical step in addressing an ongoing problem. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources provided guidance and assistance with the harvests, which are expected to continue until a better solution is found.

In July, the Park and Recreation Department experienced the first accidental death of a long-time staff member, Kenneth Conley. In addition to being a traumatic experience for the staff, the event led to the department being cited by OSHA. As a result, programs for Lockout/Tagout, Hazard Communications, and Hazard Assessment/Personal Protective Equipment were developed and put into practice.

1999

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A year of construction! A new maintenance shop was built at Hawthorn Park. Fowler Park maintenance shop underwent major renovation. Wood boiler heating systems that heat both the maintenance shops and

caretakers' residences were added to Fowler and Hawthorn Parks. A third system was installed at Prairie Creek Park to heat the maintenance shop only. This system of heating was chosen as wood is in abundance at the parks, making the system more economical than gas or oil heat. A storage building was built with funds from the Soil, Water, and Conservation District at Prairie Creek Park. The building was then given to the Park and Recreation Department with the understanding that it would be leased to the district with a portion of the building dedicated to park use.

In July, Hulman and Company transferred ownership of Markle Mill Park to the county for its preservation as an historic landmark. A dam and mill were built on the site in 1816 by Colonel Abraham Markle. Remnants of the mill foundation remain. This eight-acre park is on Otter Creek in northern Vigo County.

2000

In January, Prairie Creek Park was expanded to a total of 282.75 acres with the purchase of an additional 80 acres to the north. Of that acreage, 63.7 acres of woodland are a natural nature study area. This addition was named Elliott Woods in memory of Auguston Elliott. The land, part of an original 500-acre farm, had remained in the family since 1840 when Elliott began purchasing farmland.

2001

Renovation was the theme! The Fowler Park caretaker's house received a new roof. The Hawthorn Park caretaker's house was vinyl sided and had windows replaced. Prairie Creek Park's Persimmon Shelter was given a new concrete floor with an aggregate walkway. The fully accessible fishing docks at Hawthorn Park were torn down and completely rebuilt as was the beach stone wall. The addition of the weather channel to the Park and Recreation Department's

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repeater and portable radio system improved safety by giving staff the ability to warn campers, swimmers, and other visitors of incoming storms.

2002

The Park and Recreation Department received a grant from the Indiana Department of Commerce Tourism, Development Division to hire a professional company to design and print 20,000 park brochures. This was a dream come true. The brochures were distributed to state welcome centers, businesses, etc.

“The Employee and Management Handbook” was updated.

Construction and renovation were once again on the agenda. A new shower house was built to replace the outdated one at Prairie Creek Park. Hawthorn Park staff renovated beach and campground shower houses. Fowler Park’s Shelter A received a new roof and a new concrete floor. Tennis courts at Prairie Creek Park were resurfaced. A bush honeysuckle eradication project was initiated at Hawthorn Park with Purdue University Forestry Extension. The year ended with the foundation of a labyrinth being laid at Hawthorn Park. Lavern Smith donated \$50,000 to the park department in memory of her husband for the project.

2003

The Smith Labyrinth was completed and dedicated. The meditation garden surrounding the labyrinth began with the planting of Hawthorn trees. New playground equipment was purchased for the rural parks. Engineered wood mulch was added under all the equipment there and at smaller playgrounds at both Fowler and Hawthorn Parks to make them handicapped accessible.

2004

Fowler Park’s campground shower houses were renovated. Hawthorn Park staff continued renovation of restroom and shower house facilities there. Construction



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of the Elliott Woods trail at Prairie Creek Park began with the design and clearing of the trail.

2005

A ROMTEC SST traditional single cedar waterless restroom was added to Markle Mill Park. An accessible fishing dock was constructed south of Prairie Creek Park's Persimmon Shelter.

2006

Two new restrooms were completed at Prairie Creek Park. A gazebo was installed at Markle Mill Park. The Heritage Trail spur into Hawthorn Park was completed. Two ROMTEC restrooms were installed at Hawthorn Park.

2007

ROMTEC restrooms were installed at Prairie Creek Park and Fowler Park. A \$295,000.00 Heritage Trust Fund Grant was approved and used to purchase 691.317 acres that were enrolled in Wetland Reserve Program for land west of the Wabash River. A modular home was purchased for Prairie Creek Park and will serve as the Prairie Creek Park Caretaker's home. A shower house/ restroom was completed at Fowler Park.

2008

The Vigo County Park and Recreation Department purchased the Ramsey Tavern property (the State of Indiana has half ownership). The Holcomb, Wassel, and Nation property was purchased for the project west of the Wabash River. Lauras' Cabin was completed at Fowler Park's Pioneer Village. A new Blacksmith Shop was built at Fowler Park's Pioneer Village.

2009

A new liner was installed to the J. I. Case Wetland Wildlife Refuge overflow pipe. On October 26, the Board approved amending the name of the organization to

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Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department, adding an 's' to Park to identify the expansion of the parks system.

2010

Wabash Valley Master Gardeners committed to maintaining landscaping at the Smith Memorial Labyrinth in Hawthorn Park. The Foltz Cabin in the Fowler Park Pioneer Village was dedicated. Elliott Woods at Prairie Creek Park was dedicated and opened. In preparation for a significant loss of operating funds in the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department annual budget, the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department restructured. Full-time employees were reduced by 4 employees through layoffs. A level of management and the Foreman position at each park, was removed from the organizational structure.

2011

The Sugar Cabin at Prairie Creek Park was expanded. An accessible playground was installed at Fowler Park's Shelter B. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department was awarded a Recreational Trails Program grant for the construction of the Wabashiki Trail on the US Army Corps levee (1.95 miles) in West Terre Haute totaling \$119,637.00.

Park renovations to the George and Ida Smith Park in Prairieton were completed. The park received a new accessible playground, swings, basketball goals, shelter, covered picnic tables, parking area, perimeter fencing, and entrancing signage and landscaping. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department received an Indiana Park and Recreation Association Park Development award for the park renovations.

2012

Elliott Woods at Prairie Creek Park was officially named an Indiana State Nature Preserve. The Wabashiki Trail was expanded by approximately 5 miles on the agricultural levee surrounding the Wabashiki State Fish and Wildlife Area. New segments of trails at Prairie Creek Park were created to connect existing trails,

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creating a continuous loop trail system within the park. A shelter at Fowler Park, formerly referenced as Shelter B, was dedicated in honor of Mr. Harry Brentlinger. The shelter was renamed Brentlinger Shelter.

2013

Kara Kish replaced Keith Ruble as Superintendent of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department. The lake at Fowler Park was dedicated to former Superintendent, Keith Ruble and was renamed W. Keith Ruble Lake. The Wabashiki Trail was officially dedicated and opened on National Trails Day. The dedication was attended by Indiana Governor Mike Pence. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board accepted the Conceptual Master Plan for the Dewey Point Trailhead in West Terre Haute. The plan was created by Taylor, Siefker, Williams Design Group and funded by Wabash River Development and Beautification, Inc.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department created and filled the full-time position of Natural Resource Programmer. The position will create, implement, and evaluate nature-based programming and oversee department special events and marketing efforts. Park renovations to Prairie Creek Park were completed. The park received a new accessible playground, swings, tennis courts, horseshoe pits, basketball goals, shelter, covered picnic tables, parking area, and landscaping. An accessible playground was installed at Prairie Creek Park's Maple Shelter.

All Hawthorn Park trails were resurfaced. An accessible playground was installed at Hawthorn Park's Dogwood Shelter. Culvert pipes at Fowler Park and Hawthorn Park were replaced. Restrooms at Fowler Park (Shelter A), Hawthorn Park (Dogwood Shelter), and Prairie Creek Park (Maple Shelter) were selected to remain open year-round. Equipment to heat the facilities were installed. The lift stations at Fowler Park were refurbished.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board approved an ash tree management plan, following an ash tree inventory, for the infestation of the

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Emerald Ash Borer. The management plan will span at least 10 years, alternating ash tree treatment every other year. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board created an advisory council to complete a Feasibility Study for a 300-acre bike park in the Fowler Park Wilderness Area.

2014

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department nature-based programming began under the direction of the Natural Resource Programmer. Wabash River Development and Beautification, Inc. (riverSCAPE) contributed \$75,000.00 towards the installation of a restroom and shelter at Dewey Point in West Terre Haute.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board accepted a Feasibility Study for a 300-acre bike park in the Fowler Park Wilderness Area, created by Hilride Progression Development Group.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board approved a conceptual plan for a 300-acre bike park in the Fowler Park Wilderness Area, to be named the Griffin Bike Park. Hilride Progression Development Group was contracted to complete the Design Phase of the Griffin Bike Park.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board acquired 822 acres of land from Pfizer, Inc. The land was purchased for \$50,000.00. The Wabash Valley Community Foundation and the Vigo County Redevelopment Commission each contributed \$25,000.00 towards the purchase of the property. Portions of the 822-acre acquisition for the former Pfizer property were accepted by the State of Indiana's Bicentennial Nature Trust. The Bicentennial Nature Trust will issue a grant to the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department of \$50,000.00 to match the purchase price. The funds will be used for trail development.

Construction began on the dam at Ruble Lake in Fowler Park. This major dam renovation was initiated to meet requirements of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. S&G Excavating was awarded the bid at \$300,405.00.

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\$425,000.00 has been appropriated to the project from the Parks and Recreation cash balance and the Vigo County EDIT fund to cover construction and engineering services. Ruble Lake was drained prior to construction.

The ash tree management plan began with the removal of ash trees that would not be treated, and treatment of ash trees at Fowler Park. The presence of Emerald Ash Borer was confirmed in Fowler Park. A schoolhouse was constructed in the Fowler Park Pioneer Village. The schoolhouse was funded by the Educational Heritage Association, Inc. of Vigo County. A dedication was held at Pioneer Days.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department entered a 3-year partnership with Indiana State University to maintain the Wabashiki Trail in West Terre Haute. Indiana State University will provide \$25,000.00 annually to assist with maintenance operations, staffing, and the purchase of equipment. The partnership may be renewed at the expiration of the current term.

2015

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Department (1965- 2015). A proclamation was issued by the Vigo County Commissioners recognizing the achievement.

Another full-time position of Maintenance Specialist was created, bringing the number of full-time Maintenance Specialists to seven. A part-time position was created for implementing marketing and social media efforts and operates under the direct supervision of the Natural Resource Programmer.

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board dedicated 300-acres of Vigo County parkland in Fowler Park for the exclusive use of the Griffin Bike Park (formerly the Fowler Park Wilderness Area). The department entered the construction phase contract for the Griffin Bike Park with Hilride, slated for a 2016 opening. Friends of Griffin Bike Park was established. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was adopted outlining the responsibilities of the Friends of

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Griffin Bike Park and the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department for the fundraising, construction, and operation of the Griffin Bike Park.

A large, accessible deck was constructed over Ruble Lake at the Brentlinger Shelter in Fowler Park. Damage to the Gristmill in the Fowler Park Pioneer Village due to flooding in 2008 was repaired. Improvements to Hawthorn Park included renovations to several campsites and the addition of an amphitheater allows for programming and use by campers and visitors.

2016

A critical need was met when the Fowler Park roadway was repaved, helping increase access to all areas of the park. Using EDIT funds, the department made necessary structural improvements throughout the parks system. Several roadways and restrooms were built or improved, and a new playground was installed in Fowler Park. The Griffin Bike Park opened, creating a major regional attraction.

2017

Another year for infrastructure improvements, the department saw upgrades to the restrooms at the Tupelo shelter and Burkeybyle shelter in Hawthorn Park, while a new restroom was installed at Dogwood shelter, one that is open year-round. Other improvements were made throughout the year at South 7th Street Park and Lee Fields Park to completely remodel and install new basketball courts, a walking trail, shelters, playground equipment, and benches. The department implements the new camp host role. The camp host is an individual who stays at the campground, answers campers' questions, enforces policies, helps keep the restrooms clean- all in exchange for free camping.

2018

The department celebrated the bicentennial of our county by dedicating Bicentennial Park to the citizens of Vigo County. Through a recreational trail grant, the department built .6 miles of new trail through the park and installed

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parking and other amenities. A new maintenance shop was completed at Prairie Creek Park, a vital component to operating the park. Electrical upgrades were made to the campgrounds at Fowler Park as many of the structures were aging and failing. The reconstruction of the Cochran-Plummer Cabin was completed, and a grand reopening happened at the annual Christmas Walk event.

2019

In May of 2019 Adam Grossman replaced Kara Kish as the Superintendent of the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department. A remodel was scheduled and designed for the shower house at Fowler Park. The Irishman's Bridge, a historic covered bridge at Fowler Park, was rebuilt with the help of a local contractor and volunteer labor. Eleven miles of new natural trails and crossings were built at Ruble Park, weaving throughout the 822-acre property. Pioneer Village upgrades continue to be a priority. Many cabins went too many years without needed maintenance such as roofing and repair of cabins, protective structure for the Wabash and Erie Canal Lock Timbers was built.

2020

In early 2020 cabin roof repair continued, the pioneer village was in disrepair and in need of much maintenance. Exercise equipment was installed at Hawthorn and Prairie Creek. The Vigo County Parks along with help from RiverSCAPE bought a new property and shop building formerly known as PJ trucking that became the West Terre Haute maintenance shop.

2021

The kayak canoe launches were installed in Fowler, Hawthorn, and Bicentennial Parks. Hawthorn Park also improved drainage in the campground area. All new waterlines were finished this year in all the parks along with new electrical service upgrades. Prairie Creek Park's roadways were all Micro sealed. The Lick Creek Cabin was built for a pioneer rental at Fowler Park.

2022

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A boat dock was installed at Fowler Park. ADA campsites were begun at all 3 campgrounds. Soccer goals were installed at Hawthorn Park. Kayak rentals, wood and ice sales were all implemented at Fowler Park. Ruble Park was officially opened in April.

2023

Griffin Bike Park was wrapping up a large trail Next Level Trails Grant project, Managed by the Griffin family. Walkways were built to grills at shelters to make them more accessible. Mill Dam was deeded to the Vigo County Parks, and the dam removal project was finished while making park improvements to parking and amenities. The recreational trails grant was finished in Bicentennial Park, building a 0.6 mile trail.

2024

Griffin Bike Park was awarded money through Health First Indiana and Economic Development to build a facility that would alleviate needs for offices, vendor space, and community space. Design started in spring 2024. Hawthorn Park roadways were micro sealed and paved crossovers. Fowler will receive a rental wagon, while Prairie Creek and Hawthorn will offer their first rental cabins. In June, the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department transferred the property that was South 7<sup>th</sup> Street Park to the West Terre Haute Waterworks in exchange for an equal value of water at Dewey Point. This was initiated when West Terre Haute created its own parks board, pursuing parkland and projects.

### **Vigo County and the Wabash and Erie Canal**

When built, the Wabash and Erie Canal was the longest canal in the world at 468 miles from Lake Erie in Toledo, OH, to Evansville, IN. The only canal in the world to surpass its length was the Grand Canal in China. Approximately 28 miles of the Wabash Erie Canal was located in Vigo County. Canal construction started here in 1837 with the first boats arriving in 1848. The Cross Cut Canal section, which was Terre Haute to Point



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Commerce/ Worthington, was finished in 1850. Terre Haute was the canal headquarters from 1847 until 1876 when the canal was auctioned off at the Vigo County Courthouse. Terre Haute was the lowest level between summits at Fort Wayne and Riley. It had the only double lock on the canal. The Riley area had two of the only locks on the canal made of stone. Lock #47, site of the proposed canal park, was said to be the best stone lock on the entire canal. It was built by Robert Logan, a Scottish mason who lived near Petersburg. Riley was originally platted as a canal town and called Lockport, the name which later changed due to post office regulations. There is still a ¾-mile section of that canal that is watered south of Riley. Visitors can see some of the original Wabash and Erie Canal Lock timbers at Fowler Park in the pioneer village. Some timbers sit under a protective covering with educational signage and the rest remain submerged in Ruble Lake to protect from rot.

The proposed park will be open to the public in 2025 with parts of the trail, referred to as the Riley Trail, already complete. This park will be located within the old Riley Lock #47 property. There will be added parking, a trail and educational signage at the site. The trail, which is proposed to extend from Riley to Terre Haute, follows much of the original canal route since the railroad was constructed mostly on the Wabash and Erie Canal's right-of-way.

**Social and Economic Factors (from the 2020 US Census)**

All statistical information collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, July 1, 2023 (V2023), American Community Survey.

	<b>Vigo County, Indiana</b>	<b>State of Indiana</b>
Population Estimates, July 1, 2023 (V2023)	106,006	6,862,199
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020 (V2023)	106,158	6,785,442
Population percent change- April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2023 (V2023)	0.0%	1.1%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	106,153	6,785,528
<b>Age and Sex</b>		
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.4%	5.9%
Persons under 18 years, percent	20.5%	23.1%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	17.7%	17.2%

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Female persons, percent	49.6%	50.4%
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>		
White alone, percent	87.7%	83.7%
Black or African American alone, percent	7.0%	10.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.4%	0.5%
Asian alone, percent	2.1%	2.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races, percent	2.8%	2.5%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	3.3%	8.8%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	84.8%	76.0%
<b>Population Characteristics</b>		
Veterans, 2018-2022	6,326	352,716
Foreign born persons, percent, 2018-2022	2.9%	5.6%
<b>Housing</b>		
Housing units, July 1, 2023 (V2023)	46,941	3,002,605
Owner- occupied housing unit rate, 2018- 2022	63.1%	70.1%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2018-2022	\$130,300	\$183,600
Median selected monthly owner costs- with a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$1,114	\$1,301
Median selected monthly owner costs-without a mortgage, 2018-2022	\$444	\$477
Median gross rent, 2018-2022	\$853	\$967
Building permits, 2023	47	27,055
<b>Families and Living Arrangements</b>		
Households, 2018-2022	42,756	2,653,596
Persons per household, 2018-2022	2.32	2.49
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2018-2022	81.4%	86.3%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2018-2022	4.7%	9.2%
<b>Computer and Internet Use</b>		
Household with a computer, percent, 2018-2022	93.7%	92.7%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2018-2022	86.3%	86.7%
<b>Education</b>		
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	90.5%	90.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2018-2022	25.6%	28.2%
<b>Health</b>		

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With a disability, under age 65 years, percent 2018-202201	12.4%	9.9%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	9.0%	8.3%
<b>Economy</b>		
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	59.5%	63.8%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2018-2022	58.8%	59.1%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	276,776	15,249,994
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)	1,268,821	51,837,274
Total transportation and warehousing receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)	109,508	20,385,955
Total retail sales, 2017 (\$1,000)	1,683,499	102,106,020
Total retail sales per capita, 2017	\$15,639	\$15,326
<b>Transportation</b>		
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2018-2022	19.4	24.0
<b>Income and Poverty</b>		
Median household income (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$52,789	\$67,173
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2022 dollars), 2018-2022	\$30,240	\$35,578
Persons in poverty, percent	18.5%	12.6%
<b>Businesses</b>		
Total employer establishments, 2022	2,455	153,748
Total employment, 2022	41,216	2,875,908
Total annual payroll, 2022 (\$1,000)	1,849,037	158,017,872
Total employment, percent change, 2021-2022	3.1%	4.4%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2021	5,155	460,720
All employer firms, Reference year 2017	1,858	102,435
Men-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	924	61,140
Women-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	S	17,721
Minority-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	132	7,979
Nonminority-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	1,359	85,873
Veteran-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	126	6,326
Nonveteran-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	1,283	85,314

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Geography		
Population per square mile, 2020	263.0	189.4
Population per square mile, 2010	267.4	181.0
Land area in square miles, 2020	403.61	35,826.03
Land area in square miles, 2010	403.31	35,826.11

**Population (2023)**

- According to the 2023 US Census, Vigo County had 106,153 residents.
  - 50.4% Male; 49.6% Female.
  - 87.7% White; 7.0% Black or African American; 0.4% American Indian; 2.1% Asian; 0.1% some other race.
  - 3.3% report themselves as being of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity (of any race)
  - 12.4% of the population under 65 years of age had a disability.
  - 4.7% of population speaks a language other than English at home.
- The 2023 Census shows a 0.0% population decrease since 2020.

**Economics in Vigo County**

- According to the May 2022 Office of Workforce Development, Vigo County had a 3.0% unemployment rate.
- Median household income in 2022 (dollars) per United Way’s ALICE: \$51,125, below the state average of \$66,785.
- Per United Way’s ALICE, 21% in Vigo County are living in poverty, far above the state average of 13%.

**Housing**

- Average household size in Vigo County: 2.32.
- 46,941 total housing units.
- Median monthly owner costs- with a mortgage: \$1,114.
- Median gross rent: \$853.

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### Education

- 90.5% of population High school graduate or higher.
- 25.6% Bachelor's degree or higher.

### Socio-economic Summary

- Vigo County has a higher number of people living in poverty than the state average and a lower-than-average level of education.
- Vigo County has a similar level of racial and ethnic diversity to the state averages; with significant increases in both areas.
- The housing and economic characteristics for Vigo County are lower statewide averages.
- Vigo County is experiencing slow population decline, as is much of rural Indiana.

The implication of this data for parks and recreation is that Vigo must consider financial accessibility to their parks and programs, to avoid 'pricing out' the 21% of the local population that lives near or below poverty level. People with access to little resources rely on the department's programming, events, and facilities. It is important for them to have access to these resources free of charge or for a nominal fee. The Department's partnerships and collaborations with organizations around Vigo County are vital for providing programming and experiences to our population's children.

Much of VCPRD programming is free or a nominal fee. Vigo County parkland, unlike many others, is free entry with no admittance fee. Fees are only charged to defray programming costs, or for rental space such as camping, shelters, or our indoor barn rental. VCPRD has investigated specific pricing for residents and rentals but cannot at this time make it accommodate the online reservation system. VCPRD will continue to work on this process.

In addition to accommodating the under-resourced of Vigo County, it is also crucial to meet the needs of those with disabilities as 12.4% of Vigo County's population has a disability under the age of 65 compared to the state average of 9.9%. This shows the importance of identifying the needs of persons with disabilities in the community and identifying how we can meet those needs as a department.

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Parks are usually among the top 3 things people look for when staying or moving to an area. Parks, housing, and schools round out those thoughts. Parks are vital to the growth, health, and wellbeing of a community.

### **Accessibility and Universal Design**

Designated ADA Coordinator:

Tammy Allen

650 s. 1st, Terre Haute, IN 47807

Phone: 812-462-3367

Tammy.york-allen@[VigoCounty.in.gov](mailto:Tammy.york-allen@VigoCounty.in.gov)

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department strives to meet the needs of all community members by providing public spaces and programming that is accessible to the greatest number of users possible. Title II of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires park facilities, amenities, and programs to meet minimum accessibility regulations and that all new construction or alterations be accessible to people with disabilities. It is the goal of this department to not only meet minimum accessibility requirements but to incorporate Universal Design principles and practices in all future park projects to enhance inclusivity within the county park system. Several strategic actions related to accessibility were accomplished in the 2020-2024 master plan; including restroom entrance upgrades, accessibility signage, trail maintenance and resurfacing, resurfacing entrances, building concrete access to grills, accessible campsites, marketing accessible features, and online registration items to allow for selection of special accommodations. The decision to direct large sums of funds to enhance access is a difficult one when considering the department's limited staffing, a growing park system with aging infrastructure, and a budget that hasn't seen a major increase in years. Department leadership understands the importance and significance of inclusivity. The staff continues to strive to make small improvements often and large improvements when the opportunity exists. These types of improvement and others like accessible play equipment, will continue into the next 5 years.

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***ADA Grievance Procedures***

Any person(s) may contact the Vigo County ADA Coordinator with concerns, complaints, questions, and/or comments. The ADA Coordinator can be reached anytime Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

In 2019, department staff conducted a self-evaluation to determine the current accessibility of VCPRD facilities, amenities, and programs. Work has been done yearly to improve existing structures and facilities. The details of the self-evaluation are provided below.

***VCPRD Accessibility Self-evaluation***

**Playgrounds**

Accessible Components: Play equipment accessible with park playgrounds include swings and ground level play equipment. Engineered wood fiber is an ADA-approved material used in all VCPRD playground surface areas. Accessible routes to restrooms and parking facilities are established in most parks from all playground areas. VCPRD in 2022 ground and filled cracks in walkways to be compliant with ADA.

Not Fully Accessible Components: Hawthorn Park playground is close to restroom facilities, but direct playground to restroom is limited due to an elevated curb to paved walkway. Play equipment does not include accessible ramps for children with disabilities to utilize equipment on elevated tiers of the playground. Prairie Creek Park Maple Shelter does not provide an even ground transition from the shelter and will be addressed in 2024. New play equipment will be installed in 2025 at Fowler Park's Brentlinger shelter. This will be made to have access when installed.

**Restroom Facilities**

Accessible Components: All parks have fully accessible restroom facilities. All restrooms are accessible from parking areas, with ADA parking assigned.

**Benches/info**

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In the next two years, there will be more table and sitting areas accessible from parking areas. Not all tables, like those next to the lake, from parking areas will be made accessible. All informative signage will be accessible.

### **Parking Areas**

Accessible Components: All VCPRD parks meet requirements for enough parking spaces whether paved, concrete or gravel.

### **Fishing Docks**

Accessible Components: Fishing docks at Hawthorn Park and Fowler Park are equipped with ramps and accessible walkways. Fowler and Hawthorn Park have an accessible kayak launch.

Not Fully Accessible Components: Prairie Creek Park pathway from Persimmon Shelter to fishing pier is non-paved without trail surfacing.

### **Trails**

Accessible Components: Hawthorn Park paved trail is made to be accessible throughout the east side of the park and connects to the paved National Heritage a trail located south of the park and north of Rose Hulman Institute of Technology campus is also accessible. Wabashiki Trail—US Army Corps Levee Portion (1.95) has a small grade crushed gravel and an accessible trailhead at Dewey Point, from Dewey Point the pedestrian walkway is accessible, and the trail addition in Bicentennial Park is accessible.

Hawthorn Park's Kenneth E. Smith Memorial Labyrinth constructed out of aggregate mixed concrete is accessible. Lee Fields Park walking track is surfaced with small, crushed gravel at an accessible grade.

Not Fully Accessible Components: Most nature trails throughout the parks system are non-accessible to people with mobility disabilities due to natural terrain including steep inclines, declines, and rough terrain.



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Not Fully Accessible Components: The Pioneer Village parking area located off Bono Road is surfaced with a gravel size that prevents easy mobility and access into Pioneer Village. The paved path at Hawthorn Park, from the Labyrinth to the overlook is made to be accessible and needs signage describing the average grade and difficulty. By 2025, all grills next to shelters will be accessible.

### **Other Amenities**

Drinking fountains/hydrants are not all accessible but will be improved to be made so. Camping has been improved to at least 1 site per park, upgrades will continue to offer more accessible camping.

## **Public Participation**

The VCPRD recognizes our mission of service provision to the community. The best way for us to provide service to the community is to ask what their needs, opinions and preferences are and apply that information to our future planning. For this master plan, we used two methods of public input, followed by a final public comment period to check the accuracy and completeness all our earlier feedback-gathering.

### **Public and Stakeholders Meetings**

VCPRD held two separate public meetings along with a stakeholders meeting. The meetings and survey were advertised beginning May 3, 2024, via the VCPRD website, social media pages, news articles and notices (See Appendices), and press releases sent to local news stations, newspaper, local colleges and commissioner's calendar. VCPRD staff also invited stakeholder groups to have a representative attend from the following groups; Vigo County Council, Vigo County Commissioners, Vigo County Area Planning, Vigo County Health Department, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Friends of Griffin Bike Park Friends Group, the Griffin Family, Indiana State University, Purdue Extensions, Ivy Tech, the INDNR, Wabash Valley Community Foundation, Disc Golf donor, Thrive,

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Emily's Walk, riverSCAPE, the Vigo County Public Library, a member of the Terre Haute City Parks Department, the Boys and Girls Club along with the Fowler Park Pioneer Village Folk. The media were also invited to attend and given advance press releases and other information about the planning process. The numbers and response for each meeting were:

- May 9, 2024, 12 p.m., Vigo County Council Chambers
  - Sixteen stakeholders in attendance, including two Vigo County Commissioners.
  - Park staff shared the basics of the master plan, reviewed our achievements over the previous five years and reviewed some preliminary feedback from the public surveys so far.
  - “Pluses” included: Great job in the parks especially on working with organizations on events, great trail connectivity and the desire to add more.
  - Desired changes: Continue to add trail connectivity, more communication on programs and events to the public and possible stakeholder tours to showcase what is available in our parks, continue to add partnership opportunities.
  
- May 13, 2024, 6 p.m., Fowler Park Log Barn
  - Six citizens were in attendance, plus one reporter attended from the local news station.
  - Park staff shared the basics of the master plan, reviewed our achievements over the previous five years and reviewed some preliminary feedback from the public surveys so far.
  - “Pluses” included: Good use of funding, great programs especially for the environment and kids.
  - Desired changes included: Placing trashcans on the walkway at Wabashiki, possibly by the benches as many walk that path and throw their trash on the bridge. Dewey Point has many weeds at the kayak launch, could we also look into doing rentals there at that location. A nature center is desired,

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though it is desired to not feed birds. There is a desire to have a designated place to ride horses somewhere in the county, though we are unable to do so in our parks. The public is also concerned on the cleanliness of the playground equipment, could we look into more frequent cleaning. Finally, there is a desire for privacy showers and bathrooms within our parks.

- June, 27, 6 p.m., Vigo County Council Chambers
  - Six citizens in attendance
  - Park staff shared public comments from last meeting and plan process so far; asked for feedback (like last meeting).
  - “Pluses” included: Programs available, development of Bicentennial Park is good.
  - “Desires” included: More trail connections between parks, develop kayaking at other West Terre Haute locations and continue development of Bicentennial Park, more kayaking programs and lessons, getting information on programs out.

### Online Survey

The IDNR requires a random method of gathering public input; therefore, VCPRD created a short online survey for distribution throughout the community. The survey instrument had 30 questions and covered demographics, park use, programs, barriers to participation, types of parks use and funding preferences. The survey was advertised in advance through the VCPRD website, VCPRD Facebook, Griffin Bike Park Facebook, Channel 10 news and Channel 2 news. (See Appendices - for a copy of the survey.) The surveys were first posted May 1, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., and the advertised deadline for return was June 30, 2024. For those who were unable to complete the surveys at home due to not having a computer or internet, they could complete the survey at the Vigo County Public Library, in our office or at one of the public meetings on a tablet that was provided. The numbers and summary of responses were:

- There were surveys 427 completed

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- The average respondent was female, lived or worked in Vigo County, 30 to 50 years old, had children living at home, had an average household size of 3 people, and had a household income over \$80,000.
- The average respondent used the APRD parks once or twice a month, attended our larger programs like Pioneer Days and Christmas Walk (and enjoyed it), stated that time was the primary reason they did not recreate more, primarily used the parks to enjoy the outdoors or nature or to walk, hike and bike on our trails, and would like to see more special events or outdoor and environmental programs.

### **Final Public Presentation of the Plan**

To be edited

### **Summary/Comparison of Public Input**

#### Emerging themes

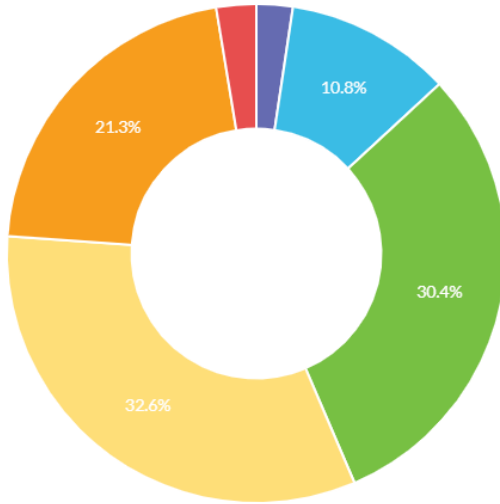
When each type of public participation method is compared, a set of common themes begins to emerge. The following are the three most common themes (in no particular order):

- Playground renovation/new equipment/accessibility.
- More programs; especially family and youth oriented.
- More trails, particularly those that connect various parks/ spaces to others.
- Continue to hold a focus on maintaining our trails and facilities.

#### Survey Results

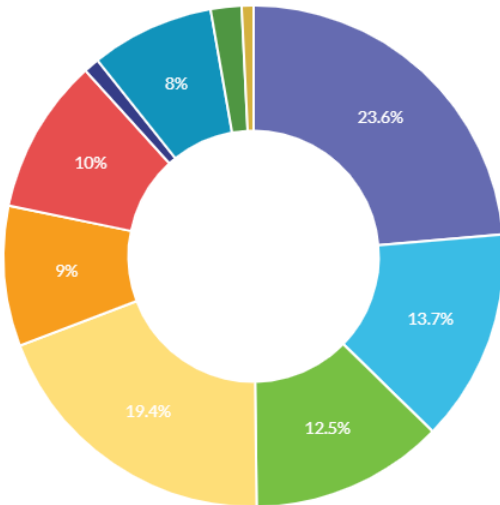
1. How often do you use the Vigo County parks? (Fowler Park, Prairie Creek Park, Griffin Bike Park, Ruble Park, Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park, Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetland, Lee Fields Park, Markle Mill Park, George and Ida Smith Park and R. Kermit Flesher Memorial Nature Preserve)

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Choice	Total
Every day	10
4 or 5 times a week	46
3 or fewer times a week	130
Once or twice a month	139
Once or twice a year	91
Never	11

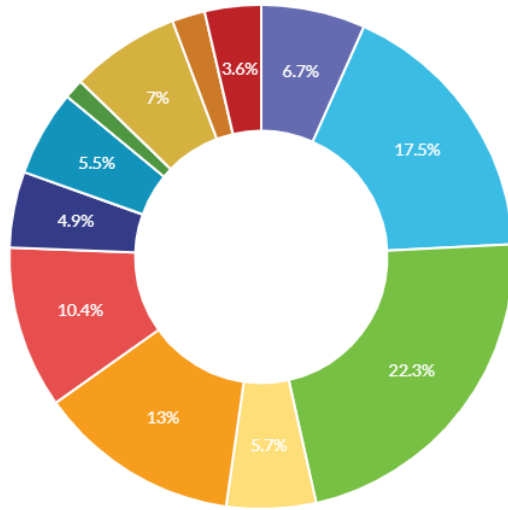
2. Which County parks, trails, facilities have you or a member of your household visited in the past year?



Choice	Total
Fowler Park	308
Prairie Creek Park	179
Griffin Bike Park	163
Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetland	253
Ruble Park	118
Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park	131
Lee Fields Park	13
Markle Mill Park	104
George and Ida Smith Park (Prairieton Park)	26
R. Kermit Flesher Memorial Nature Preserve	10

3. What amenities have you utilized at Fowler Park in the last year?

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan



Choice	Total
Campgrounds	63
Pioneer Village	165
Park trails	210
Ruble Lake	54
Playgrounds	122
Picnic/ rental shelters	98
Log Barn	46
Swimming beach	52
Canoe/Kayak Rental	12
Fishing	66
Boat ramp	20

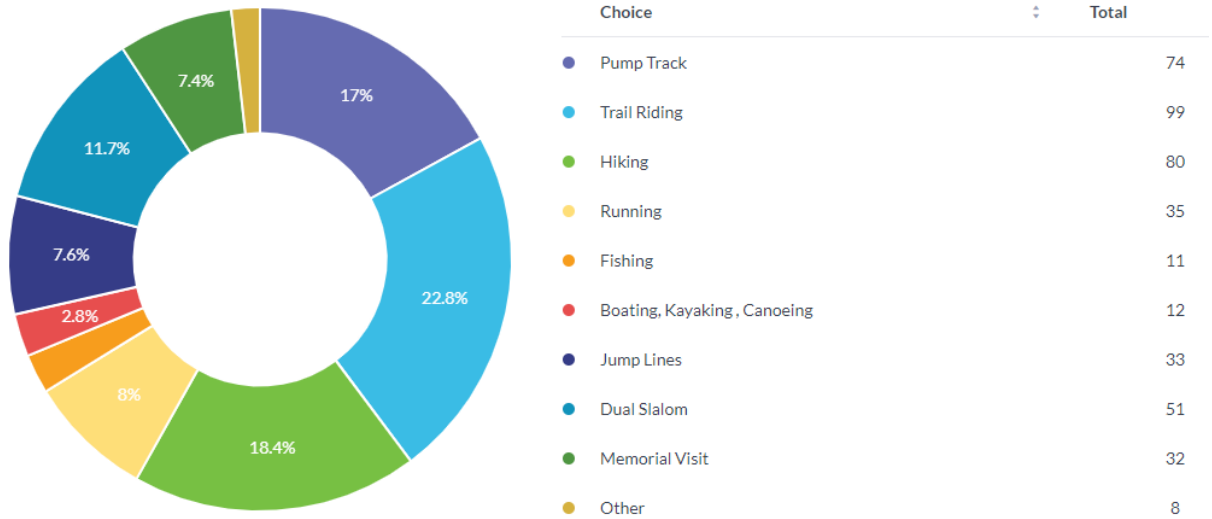
**Other:**

- Disc Golf Courses
- Public Restrooms
- Kayak Launch
- Walk the road around the park
- Just visited by the lake
- We attended the vintage trailer event
- Mountain biking
- Free library
- None because there are not any horse trails
- We use to use it when you had horse trials now I do not utilize it because it is not horse friendly
- Walking
- None
- Mainly sight seeing and photography. Plan to go fishing
- Driving around
- Vintage trailer show when it happens
- Just sit and enjoy the surroundings- the views, nature in general, walk some, enjoy the village and the rare special events
- Walking
- Canal display
- We walk our dog almost every day
- Sat and watched people and the occasional quadriceps!
- Walking
- Hayride
- Walking
- Beach just to dig in the sand
- Disc golf
- The road around the park
- Biking on the loop road

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

Walk our dog, walk trails and mountain bike

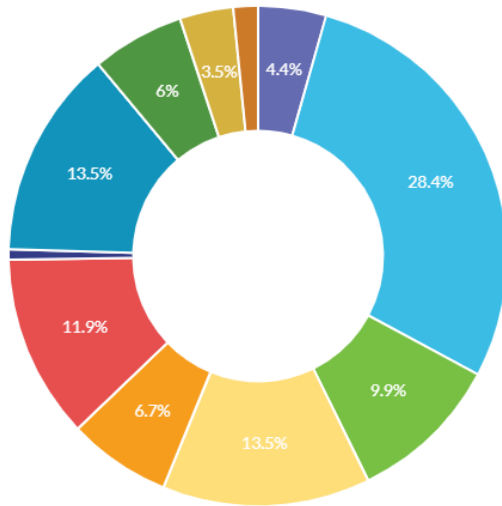
### 4. What amenities have you used at Griffin Bike Park in the past year?



Other:  
 Visit to check out facility  
 Kids loop/ picnic tables  
 Spending time with friends  
 The bathroom  
 The restroom  
 Picnicking  
 Walking our dog around the LZ

### 5. What amenities have you used at Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetlands in the past year?

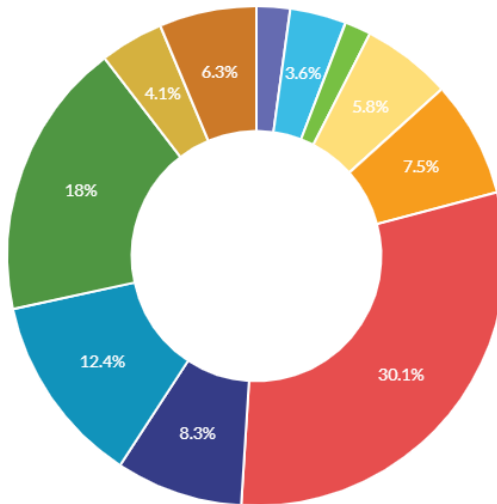
## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan



Choice	Total
Campgrounds	33
Trails	213
Kenny E. Smith Memorial Labyrinth and Meditation Garden	74
Playground	101
Fishing Piers	50
Picnic Shelters	89
Archery Fields	5
National Heritage Trail Access	101
Outdoor Workout Equipment	45
Boating, Kayaking, Canoeing	26
Other	12

Other:  
 Hosting races in the park  
 Tai chi  
 Walking  
 Restroom  
 Hanging out with friends  
 Bird watching deck  
 Ampitheater  
 Wetland overlook shelter  
 The parking lot

### 6. What amenities have you utilized at Prairie Creek Park in the last year?



Choice	Total
Baseball/ Softball field	9
Basketball Court	15
Boat ramp	7
Campgrounds	24
Fishing	31
Park trails/ Elliott Woods Nature area trails	124
Maple Sugar Cabin	34
Picnic/ rental shelters	51
Playgrounds	74
Tennis courts	17
Other	26

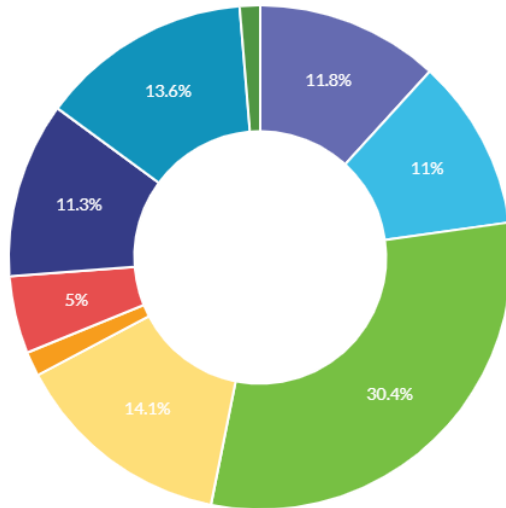
Other:  
 Disc golf x 18



## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

None  
Our favorite park  
Walking  
Camp host  
Workout  
Walking on the road

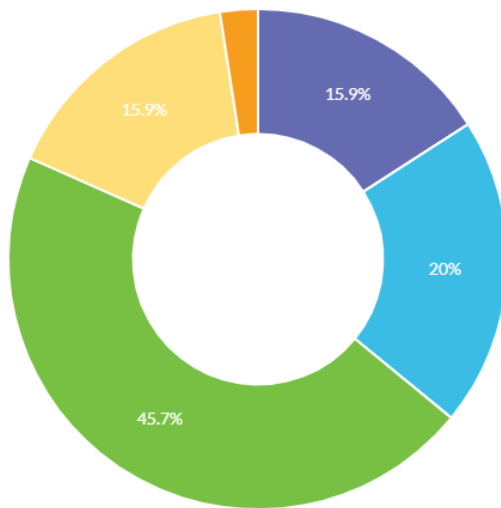
7. What amenities have you utilized at Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park in the last year?



Choice	Total
Biking	45
Butterfly garden	42
Wabashiki Trail	116
Emily's Walk Wildlife Viewing Scope/ Interpretive Kiosk	54
Boat launch	6
Kayak/ Canoe launch	19
Picnic shelter	43
Wetlands	52
Other	5

Other:  
Boardwalk  
Walking  
Bird watching  
We like bird watching from Dewey Point

8. What amenities have you utilized at Ruble Park in the last year?



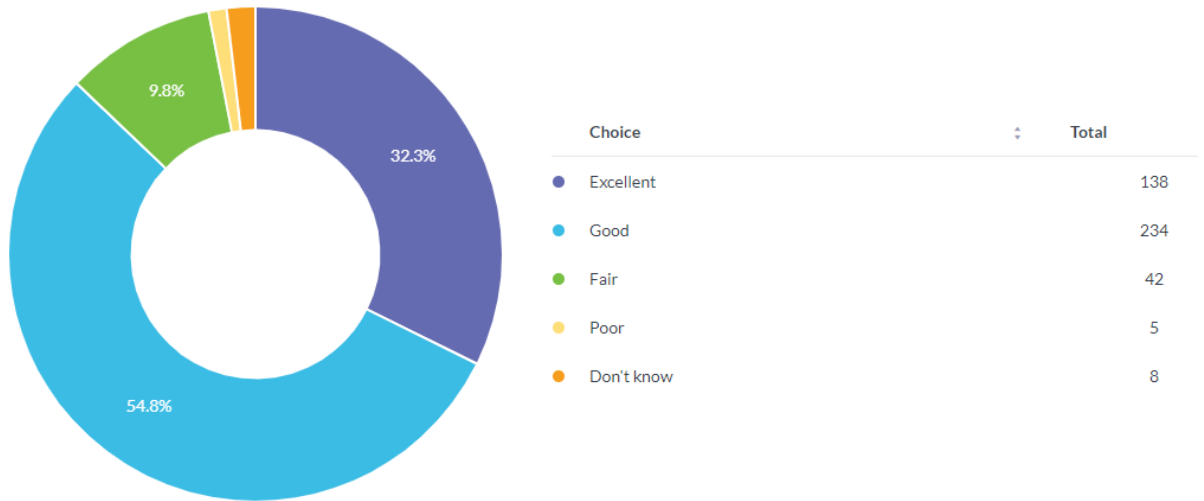
Choice	Total
Bird Watching	39
Wildlife viewing	49
Hiking trails	112
Lowland boardwalk	39
Other	6

Other:  
Potential Disc Golf area

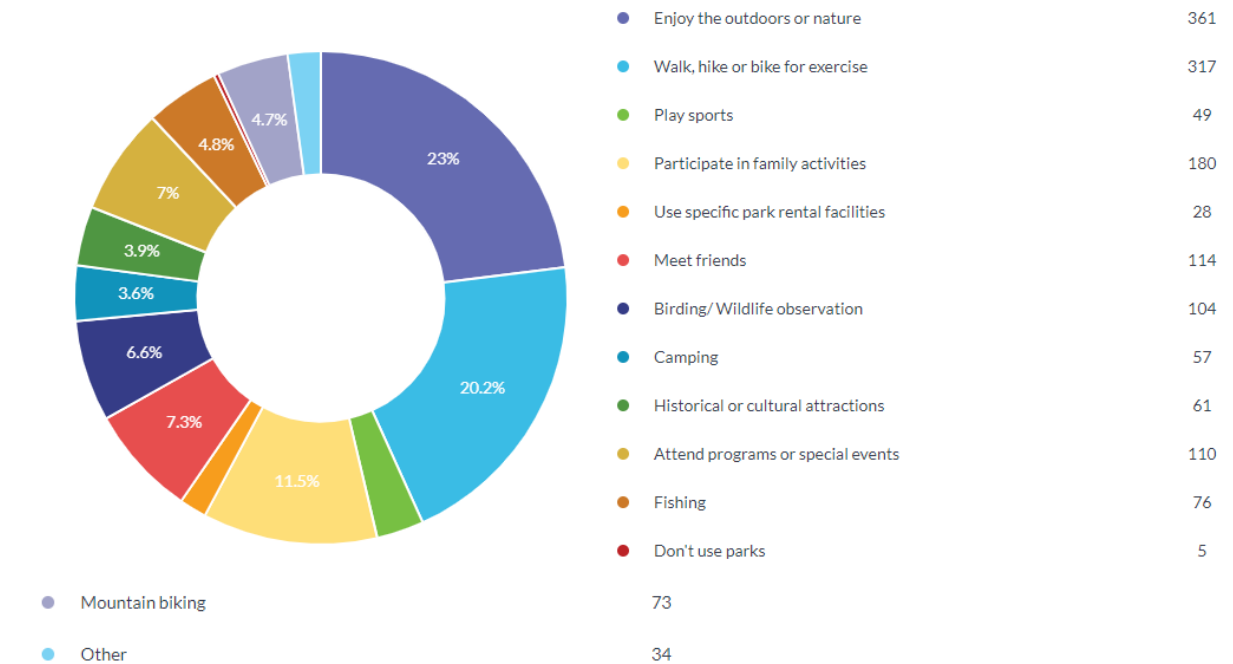
## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

Dog walking  
Host a race in the park  
Ate lunch in the parking lot  
Mushroom hunting  
Mushroom foraging

9. How would you rate the general upkeep and maintenance of the existing Vigo County Parks?



10. What are the primary reasons that you use the Vigo County Parks?

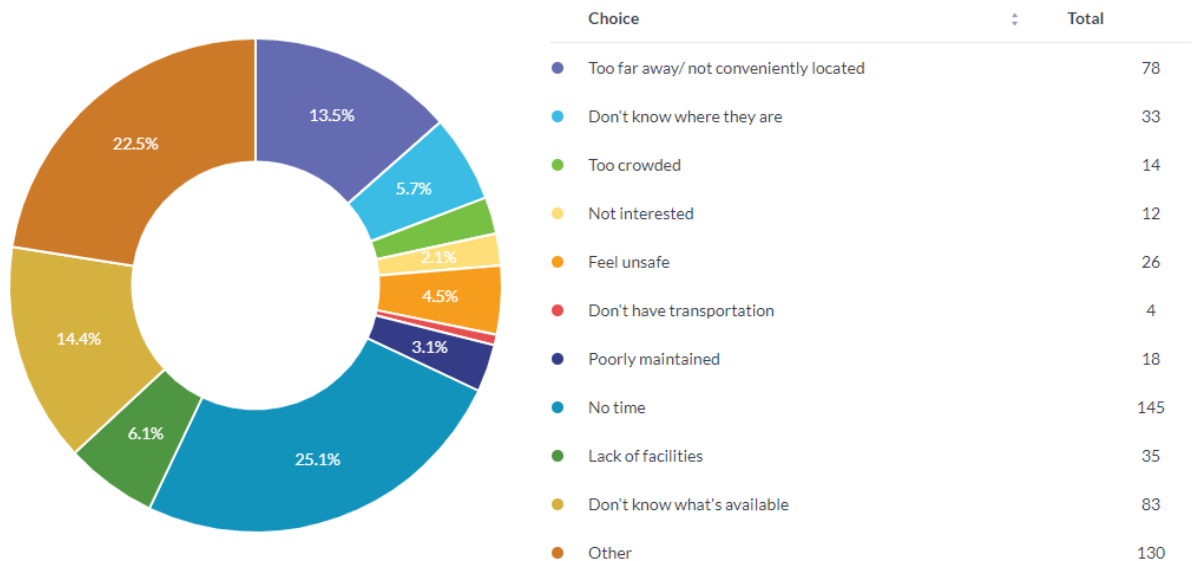


Other:  
Disc Golf x 11  
Dog walking

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

Eat lunch  
 Running  
 Onewheel and EUC  
 Playgrounds  
 I use skate parks often wish we would repair and expand on them  
 Kaya  
 Need horse trails  
 I do not use the parks because they are not equine friendly. I would very much like to see that change  
 I would use a park that provided equine trails  
 Would like to see someplace to ride horses  
 Using a wheelchair for exercise  
 Running trails  
 Biking  
 Walking for exercise  
 Tai chi practice  
 Classes and trainings  
 Hook up with buddies in woods  
 Mushroom hunting and plant foraging as well as mycology study and hobby photography  
 Take dogs on an outing  
 Homeschool group act  
 Watch the progress of Markle Mill Park improvements  
 Swimming

11. If you seldom use or do not use the Vigo County parks, what are your reasons?  
Please check your top 2 choices



Other:  
 I use them x57  
 Not enough Disc Golf courses x5

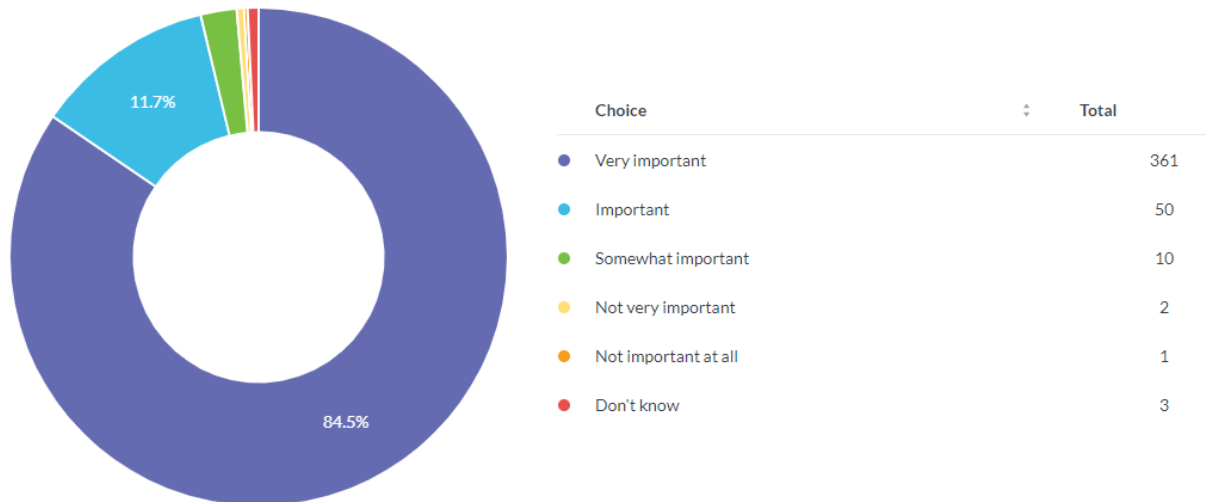
**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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I'm from Terre Haute live in Bloomington. Drive to Terre Haute mainly for tournaments  
Bathrooms could be better maintained  
I don't live in the immediate area  
Not sure if the other parks have the activities I am looking for. I prefer to fish or play disc golf. Also having a playground my child can play at is great  
Bit of a trip but worth it now and then  
It takes me 90 minutes each way to reach Griffin  
Prairie Creek back lake is horrible, the water level has killed so many trees. The road going down to boat dock is crumbling, I been down there fishing and cars try to drive down there, it's unsafe. No sign at the gate that lets people know there's no turn around. I've seen cars drop off edge of the road and bust their oil pan, It's a shame because the fishing is great is you can find a place to fish without trees that are laying in the water dead. Beavers has dropped so many weeds over growing, I've cut a path myself to get down there to fish. The last 5-6 years have took a toll on it. Sad so many people used to love to fish back there.  
Health hasn't been great this past year  
We live in KY just passing through  
I go to Griffin almost every day. Next to family, it's the best thing Terre Haute has to offer  
Campgrounds fill up too quickly  
We are traveling from northern Indiana, we try to visit annually. If we lived closer we would spend more time here!  
No trial riding or camping for horses x9  
Restrooms often closed  
Busy playing golf  
Go to Dobbs and Deming more since closer  
There has been an increase in advertising the Vigo County Parks over the past few years. Increased exposure on news and radio is good. Keep up the awesome programming!  
Difficult to utilize most local parks as a physically disabled person  
I had to look up Lee Fields and Kermit Flesher. Lee Fields is not near me (other parks closer to me) and Kermit Flesher seems to have no facilities/trails, which is why I've never been. I love the Run the Parks challenge—it's allowed me to explore on my own, then return with my family  
Would like more small picnic shelters like the one at prairie creek park  
No tai chi space  
Incentives to go and use local parks would be attractive  
Handicap  
I haven't checked out all of vigo county parks but I spend a lot of time on public lands in general. I hunt, fish, forage, on a variety of lands including but not limited to State Forests, National Forests, Nature Conservancy Land, River Conservation Areas, River Access, Fish and Wild Life Areas, State Parks, City Parks.  
Griffin Park is ALWAYS closed because of wet trails  
I'm more interested in biking a trail that is slow, safe, and has stops connected to native plantings of all kinds...prairie, woodland, wetland  
I use Deming Park almost daily; don't feel the need to use another. X2

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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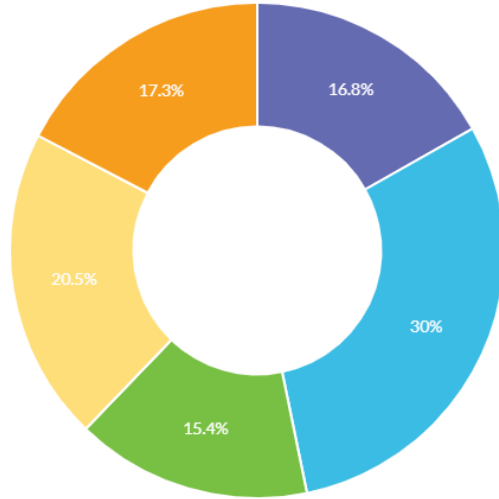
I live across from Collett Park & use it every day.  
 No excuse to not get outside  
 Work schedule  
 I'm alone  
 We don't have enough time to go as often as we would like.  
 Only when I have my grand  
 Living rural and with gas prices teens don't have much. I would love to see more stuff aimed at teens. Life Frisbee golf out in prairie creek park  
 Playground equipment at the campgrounds  
 Activities are not well advertised online  
 I live very near Markle Mill Park and enjoy walking my dog there. I do with there were level surfaces for walking. Love the parking and carved tree stumps.  
 I use the parks a lot. Please fix your reservation systems—we have been trying to camp and it won't allow us to select a site. Also, when I schedule my moms birthday party the shelter rental system was also down.  
 A few parks I didn't know existed

12. How would you rate the importance of natural open space to the community?



13. I would like to see the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department add the following things to our county parks (please check all that apply):

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Choice	Total
More accessible play equipment and facilities	133
More walking trails/ paths	237
More benches/ shelters/ gathering areas	122
More programs/ activities	162
Other	137

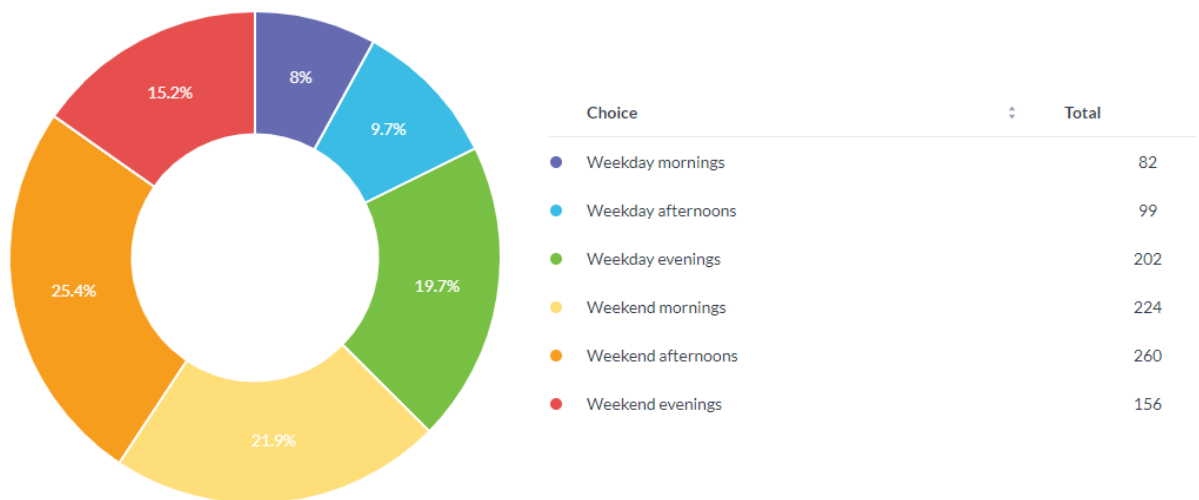
**Other:**

- Swimming x4
- Disc Golf x21
- Pool with slides x8
- More events with food trucks.
- More mountain, paved or gravel bike trails x12
- Stock lake with more fish/ upkeep ponds for fishing x4
- Restrooms open year round x5
- Longer camping times for prairie Creek. Monthly would be nice. Johnny Appleseed in Fort Wayne allows this for RVers.
- Splash pads x8
- Trails for horseback riding x11
- Paved pump track x2
- Definitely safe playgrounds for autistic and special needs children
- I would like more signage at Ruble Park on the trails.
- More restrooms!
- Free entertainment
- Some type of summer camp
- More rugged trails
- Mow at Ruble
- Pickle ball x4
- Please repair the tennis courts at Prairie Creek Park.
- Trails and paths accessible to strollers
- Dog parks x5
- More trees
- More special park activities for kids.
- Senior activities
- Playgrounds x2
- More picnic tables
- Make the parks catch and release only for fishing.
- Fix existing trails
- Full service hook up RV park x2
- Better camping facilities x2

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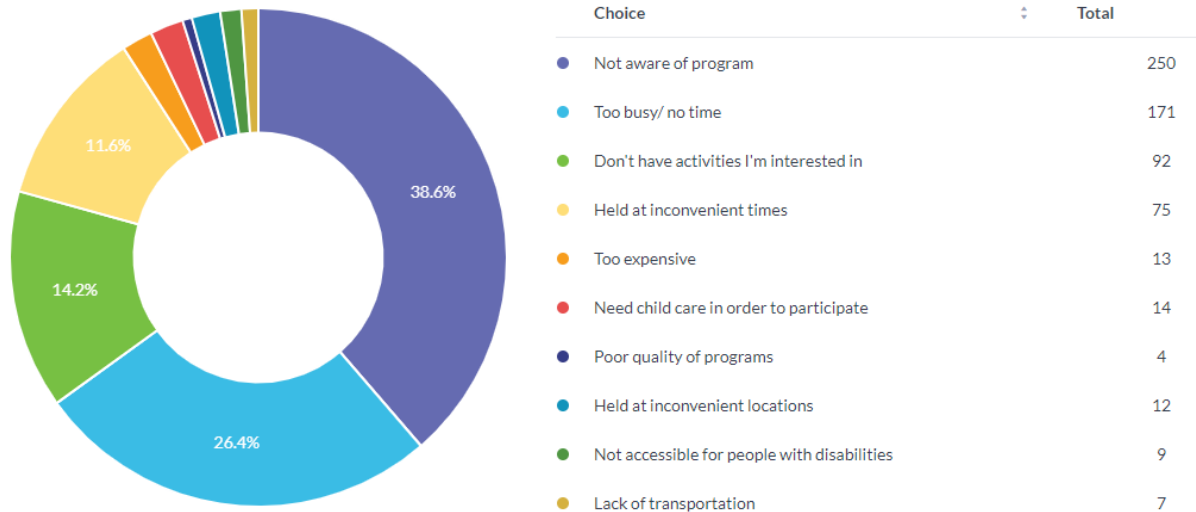
Ruble park needs more toilets  
 ATV trails  
 Keep up the maintenance of picnic tables, bathrooms, etc.  
 Gravel/ paved trails for running  
 Cycle routes connecting the parks  
 Tai Chi  
 Incentives for locals to want to go out and walk and use parks more  
 Reduce invasive plants and plant natives/ habitat restoration x5  
 Hawthorn Park boat dock handicap accessible  
 More shaded areas to park near restrooms  
 Hunting Draws  
 Stop closing Griffin Park so often  
 More parks  
 Keep improving Griffin bike park  
 Fewer parks in order to make the ones that remain better  
 There is already a lot of everything - focus on upkeep of the existing good facilities and trails/shelters and work on advertising programs better - e.g. with local elementary schools and daycare facilities for family events!  
 Water fountains  
 I think what we have is very good. Better maintenance if some trails could help.  
 Mostly interested in new trail systems to connect the parks throughout the county, city parks, and region  
 A Wabash River county park  
 More law enforcement presence  
 More parks and connectivity through bike and walking trails between the parks.  
 Engaging users in programs to enhance the parks such as nature walks  
 Love the Experience the Otter Creek programs  
 Bike shop in Griffin

14. What are the most convenient program times for you and others in your household?  
 Can select multiple

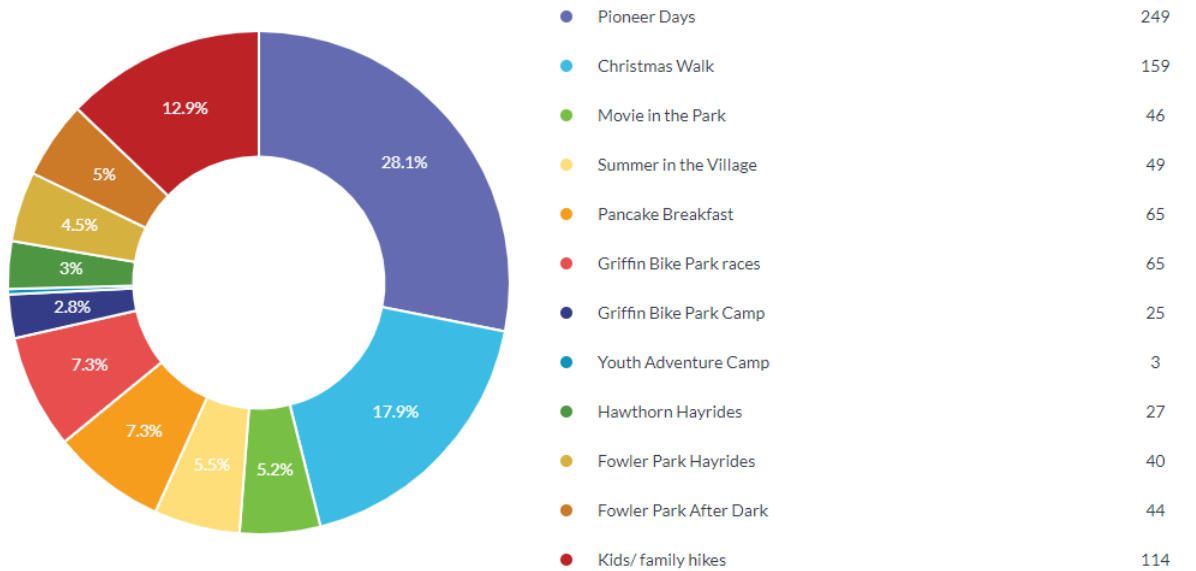


## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

15. If you do not participate in park programs or special events offered by the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department, what are your reasons?



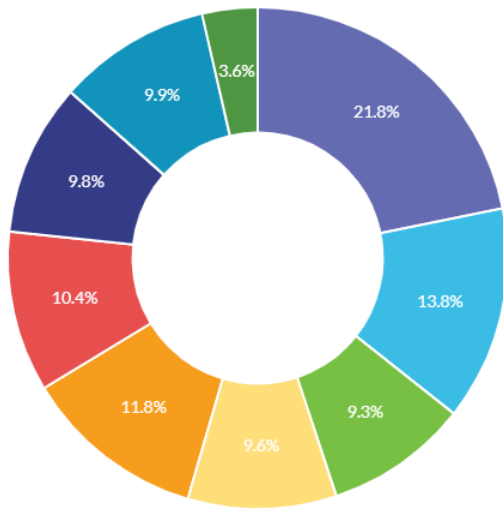
16. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department offers or co-sponsors the special events listed below. Please check ALL the special events that you and/ or members of your household have attended in the past 2 years.



17. Select the activities you would like to do most. Assume you have the time, money and transportation.



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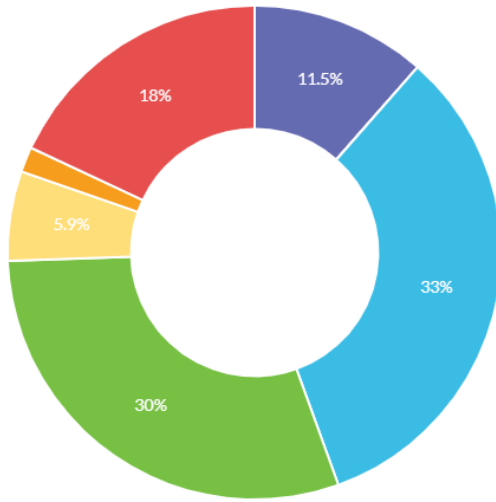
Choice	Total
Walking, jogging/ running, cycling or hiking/ backpacking for pleasure	311
Fishing, boating, kayaking/ canoeing	197
Swimming, beach activities	132
Camping	137
Playground visits/ play, picnicking	168
Photography, wildlife and bird watching	148
Historical reenactments, woodworking, hands on activities	140
Outdoor sports: baseball/ softball, cornhole, pickleball, archery, soccer, basketball, mountain biking	141
Other	51

**Other:**

- Disc Golf x 19
- Dog walking
- Mountain bike
- Craft family classes
- Concerts, live music or similar entertainment
- Trail riding horses x9
- Tennis x2
- Taking dogs to a large dog park
- Exercise my dog
- ATV trails
- Vintage trailer shows
- Play with buddies
- Hunting would be nice
- Walking in the park with stops on benches to just enjoy the outdoors
- Anything that we can do with our dog
- It would be great to have a rec center with an indoor pool. The only indoor public pool is the ymca and it is very frequently broken.
- Skate. Need somewhere to skate on Westside. Nature center/building for kids like Dobbs park.
- Family activities like the hayrides and movies
- Horse shoes
- Love anything to do with birds and plants
- Sledding at Fowler
- Water park.

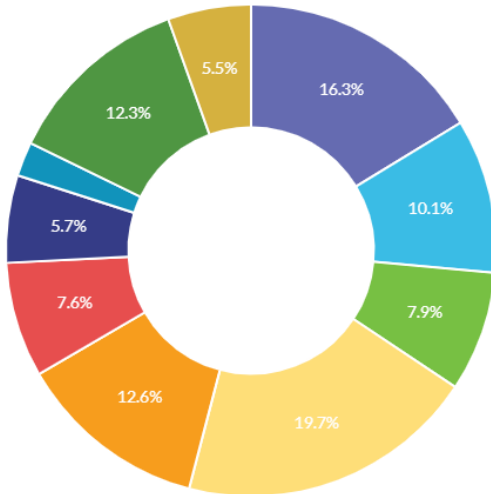
18. How would you rate the activities, programs and special events provided by the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department?

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Choice	Total
Excellent. There are many opportunities to do all or most of the activities and programs I enjoy	49
Very Good. There are several opportunities to do many of the recreation activities and programs I enjoy	141
Satisfactory. There are some opportunities to do the recreation activities and programs I enjoy	128
Not very good. There are a few opportunities to do the recreation activities and programs I enjoy	25
Inadequate. There are no opportunities to do any of the recreation activities and programs I enjoy	7
Not sure. I don't know what is offered	77

### 19. What additional recreation programs do you feel the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department should offer or expand? Please select all that apply



Choice	Total
Outdoor/ Environmental programs	196
Fitness classes (aerobics, yoga, etc.)	122
Sports (kickball, ultimate Frisbee, disc golf, etc.)	95
Special events (concerts in the parks, movies, festivals, tournaments, etc.)	237
Arts (painting in the parks, drama, music, etc.)	151
Outdoor recreation tournaments (cornhole, basketball, beach volleyball)	91
Individual or team adventure races	69
No additional programs are needed	27
Family or kids programs	148
Other	66

Other:

Swimming x2

Disc Golf x8

I would enjoy guided hikes where we learn about plants, animals, and history. Maybe some edible and medicinal foraging and survival skills workshops. It would be ideal if Indigenous people could share history and knowledge with us. Endurance events. Ultra marathons. I believe we are not utilizing Griffin Bike Park to its full potential. As endurance events such as ultra marathons and Enduro mountain biking to become more popular. I think there is a great opportunity for growth there.

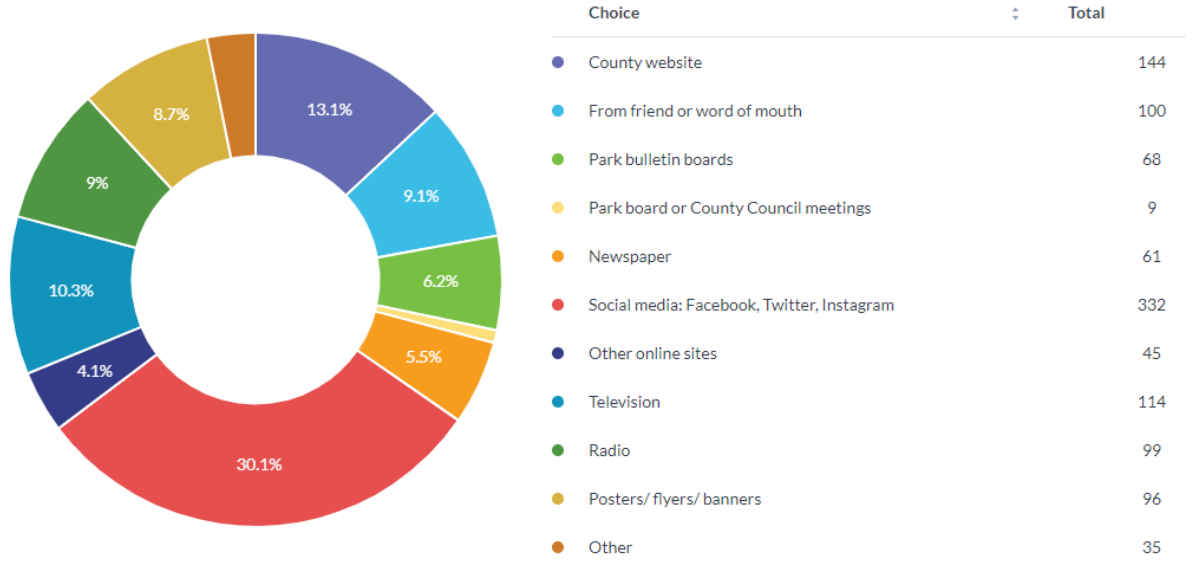
I think Hawthorn Park has an area that would work for plays near one of the shelters.

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More jumps at griffin!  
Skateboarding we have two parks could use some love and small expansion  
Things that do not cost money not everyone in this town has money  
Community water park  
More for pets!  
Homeschool programs  
Trails for horses x7  
More Pickleball courts. better "beach" access  
Senior friendly stuff..  
Pickle ball  
Dog Park x3  
Wilderness skills classes, classes on the stuff like syrup making, pioneer stuff,  
and nature  
Birding or wildlife informational programming  
ATV Trails  
Kids bicycling day  
Aquatic park  
More cycling events  
More activities in the evening  
Larger newer pool.  
Tai chi  
Senior Exercise Clases/Hikes  
Fishing tournaments  
Hunting  
Stop closing Griffin Park everything it rains. Let us ride when the trails are wet.  
Benches and refreshments for sale at pretty spots  
Specific dog friendly activities.  
Try not to be everything for everyone.  
Bushcraft, foraging, orienteering  
Skate or rollerblade area. More lighting on trails at Dewey point.  
Would love to see more volunteer days for removing Honeysuckle--which is  
REALLY bad in several of the parks--especially Hawhorne. You can't see past  
the trail in the summer due to all the tall honeysuckle on both sides of the trail--  
like walking through a tunnel, which makes it hotter in the summer, more buggy  
and less enjoyable.  
Kayak and canoe lessons if you have never tried it  
R/C trucks, cars events  
Adult MTB skills  
I love educational activities but I don't feel you NEED to add more things.  
Educational programs : bird watching, tree/plant/flower identification, history of  
parks. would be helpful if there were informational pamphlets online or at the  
parks that people could access anytime if they can't make it to organized events.  
More kayaking days  
RC cars  
Science of nature  
Water park.

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

20. What is the best way for your household to receive information on parks and recreation facilities, services and programs? Check all that apply



Other:

Text x4

A quarterly letter in the mail about up coming events would be very helpful

Newsletter

Email x20

Haute Happenings x5

A yearly pamphlet would be nice

Sign up

Calendar

If the county website were more user friendly that would be fine. Maybe an email newsletter?

21. If additional funding were available for the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to fund capital development of parks and trails, how would you allocate the funding among the competing categories below? Enter a PERCENTAGE for each category and make your total allocation equal 100%.

Improve quality of existing parks	Land (acquisition only) for park development	Other amenities
90%		
75	25	
33	33	34
33	33	34
20	60	20
40	20	40
50	40	10
40	10	50

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

20%	20%	60%
100		
20	70	10
90	10	
20	0	80
80	0	20
50		50
34	33	33
90	10	
30	50	20
50	10	40
50	25	25
40	40	20
80	20	
20	60	20
40%	40%	20%
100		
40	40	20
80	20	
60	20	20
50	40	10
25	75	
10	90	
40	60	
100		
50%	50%	
50%	50%	
50	30	20
50	50	
80	20	
60	20	20
50	30	20
70	0	30
50	25	25
80%	10%	10%
100	100	
80	10	10

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

100		
100		
80		20
40	20	40
35%	40%	25%
40	40	20
50	50	
70	10	20
50		50
50%	25%	25%
50		50
75	25	
50		50
75	25	
50	25	25
25	50	25
33	33	33
50		50
50	10	40
25		75
50	50	
45	30	25
75		25
25	75	
50	20	30
		100%
75	25	
50		50
50	50	
100		
50	35	25
25	0	75
75	25	
50	50	
		100%
40	40	20
40	20	40
60	15	25

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

50	25	25
70	15	15
75		25
100		
60	25	15
50	50	
20	60	20
30	70	
70	10	20
75		25
30%	70%	
60	30	10
40	40	20
40	40	20
25	5	70
40	40	20
60	10	30
75	25	
70	20	10
40	20	40
40	20	40
50	25	25
60	20	20
60	40	0
75		25
75		25
60	10	30
60	20	20
50%	25%	25%
10	70	20
25	75	
60		40
35	50	15
50	30	20
60	10	30
75	25	
50		50
100	0	
100		

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

20	70	10
60	10	30
50		50
20	60	20
30	60	10
30	50	20
50	25	25
50	30	20
90	10	
75	25	
50	30	20
50	50	
50	50	
100		
50		50
33	33	34
40	20	40
25	75	
100		
33%	34%	33%
60	20	20
80	20	
50	20	30
80%		20%
50	20	30
50%	50%	
70	30	
50		50
60	20	20
75	25	
60	20	20
45	10	45
60	10	30
50%	25%	25%
10	80	10
50		50
50	25	25



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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70	10	20
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50%		50%
60	20	20
60	20	20
75%	25%	
	50	50
50	10	40
70%		30%
90	10	
80%	20%	
20%	30%	50%
80	0	20
100		
60	40	
100%		
40	30	30
100		
80	20	
25	75	
80	10	10
0	0	100%
100		
30%	50%	20%
100	0	
75		25
40	40	20
55	45	5
33	33	34
50%	25%	25%
100%		
50	50	
50%	25%	25%
100%		

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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20	30	50
25	50	25
90	10	
50	25	25
40	20	30
50%	25%	25%
50%	25%	25%
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50	25	25
30	30	40
50	25	25
20	80	
70	30	
35	55	10
100		
50	20	30
75	0	25
40%	60%	
100		
50	30	20
60	20	20
80		20
98	1	1
75%	0%	
75	25	
80	10	10
80		20
50	50	
50		50
35	5	60
40	30	30
75	25	
60		40
60	20	20
33.3	33.3	33.4
30%	20%	50%
60	40	
50	35	15
85	15	

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

60	40	
25	50	25
50	50	
	100	
80	20	
50%		50%
100%		
70	20	10
70		30
50	50	
75	25	
50	50	
80	20	
70%	10%	20%
75	10	15
75%		25%
60%	30%	10%
50	25	25
10%	50%	40%
100%		
33	33	33
25	75	
70	20	10
75	25	
45	45	10
50	50	
50		50
30	60	10
75		25
50	25	25
40	30	30
	50%	50%
100		
80	0	20
20	60	20
100		
70	20	10

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

80	10	10
75	25	
40%	30%	30%
10	60	30
40	40	20
100		
25	50	25
60	40	
70%	20%	10%
60	20	20
	100	
60	20	20
65	20	15
50%	25%	25%
50%	25%	25%
70	30	
		100
40	30	30
25	75	
50	50	
50%	40%	10%
50	25	25
50		50
35	35	30
20	80	
50%	50%	
50%	20%	30%
60%		40%
80	20	
70	25	5
100		
40	20	40
75	5	20
50	50	
40%	30%	30%
50		50
70	10	20
40	40	20

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

80	10	10
60	30	10
10	80	10
50	25	25
70	10	20
30	30	40
50	50	
15	85	
90	10	
40%	40%	20%
60	30	10
60	30	10
20	80	
20	60	20
50	0	25
25	50	25
100		
100		
100	0	
50%	10%	40%
60	10	30
100		
50	25	25
100		
40	40	20
25	75	
10	10	80
50	25	25
	100	
20	30	50
75		25
50%	50%	
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50		50
30	70	
50	35	15
60	40	
30	20	50

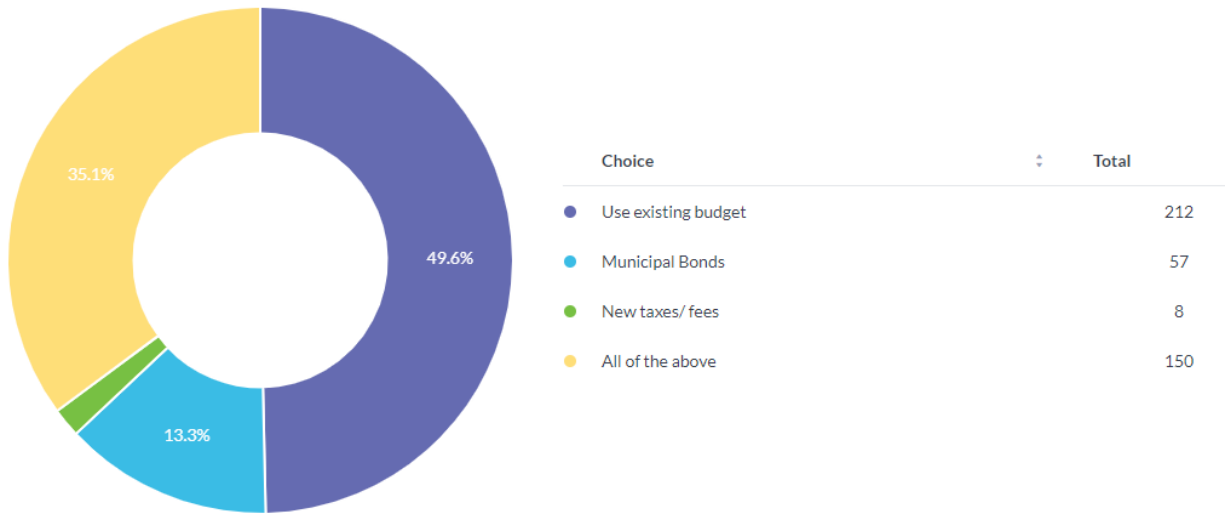
**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

35	15	50
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70	10	20
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50	20	30
80		20
50	0	50
75	15	10
60%	40%	
75%	25%	
20	50	30
50	20	30
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90	10	
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25	75	
30	50	20
90	10	
50	40	10
75	25	
75%	15%	10%
80	20	

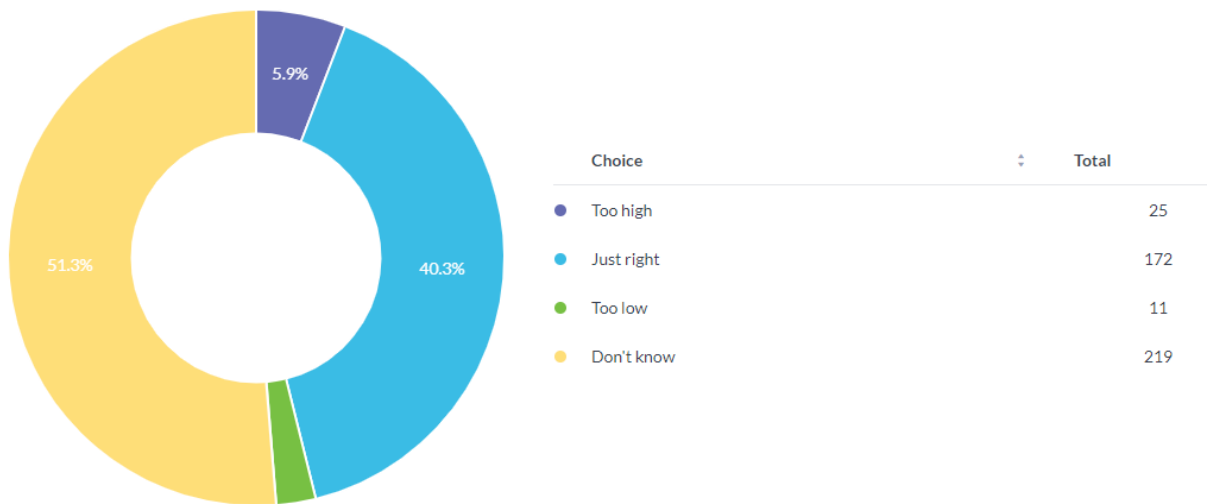
## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

75	25	
60	40	
33	33	34
40	40	20
80	10	10
75%	25%	
75	25	

22. After first applying for all available grants and donations, how would you like the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to pay for new amenities in the parks?

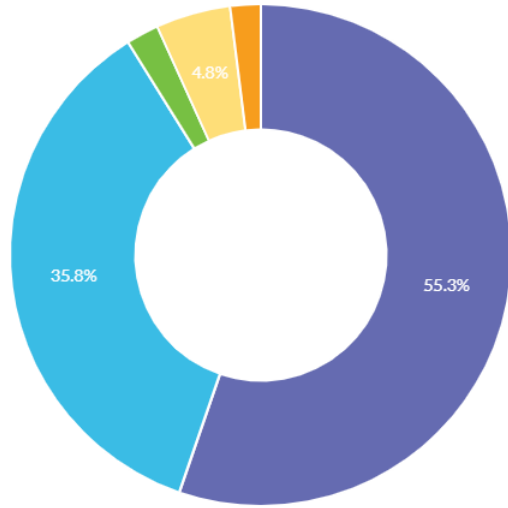


23. How do you feel the pricing on camping, amenity rentals and programs is?



24. Do you live, work or go to school in Vigo County? Choose all that apply.

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan



Choice	Total
Resident of Vigo County	367
Work in Vigo County	238
I am a college student attending a college or university in Vigo County	14
None of the above	32
Other	13

**Other:**

- Visit relatives
- Retired professionals
- Homemaker of Vigo cou
- Retired x3
- Grew up in Vigo County, planning on moving back.
- Household of 3, two of which work and attend schools in the county. Resident of 30 (non-consecutive) years.
- Retired in Vigo County
- Retired person who volunteers in various Vigo organizations
- I'm retired I worked in Vigo County 37 years.
- Live in clay co.

**25. Please input your current residential zip code**

Zipcode	Count of Zipcode
47802	147
47803	106
47805	41
47804	26
47885	21
47807	15
47834	10
47842	7
47850	5
62441	3
47874	3
47879	2
46135	2
47846	2
46037	2



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

61938	1
47876	1
47866	1
47424	1
47304	1
47512	1
46237	1
47567	1
47871	1
47581	1
47882	1
47630	1
60560	1
47707	1
62440	1
47711	1
46254	1
42025	1
47869	1
37803	1
46385	1
42045	1
47201	1
46077	1
47884	1
46038	1
47993	1
46143	1
61853	1
47840	1
61944	1
47841	1
47404	1
46176	1
46033	1

26. Please write the total number of people in your household (including children) within each age category in the table below. This helps us plan for parks needs based on who is using or may use the parks and facilities.

0-10 years	10-18 years	18-30 years	30-50 years	50-70 years	70+
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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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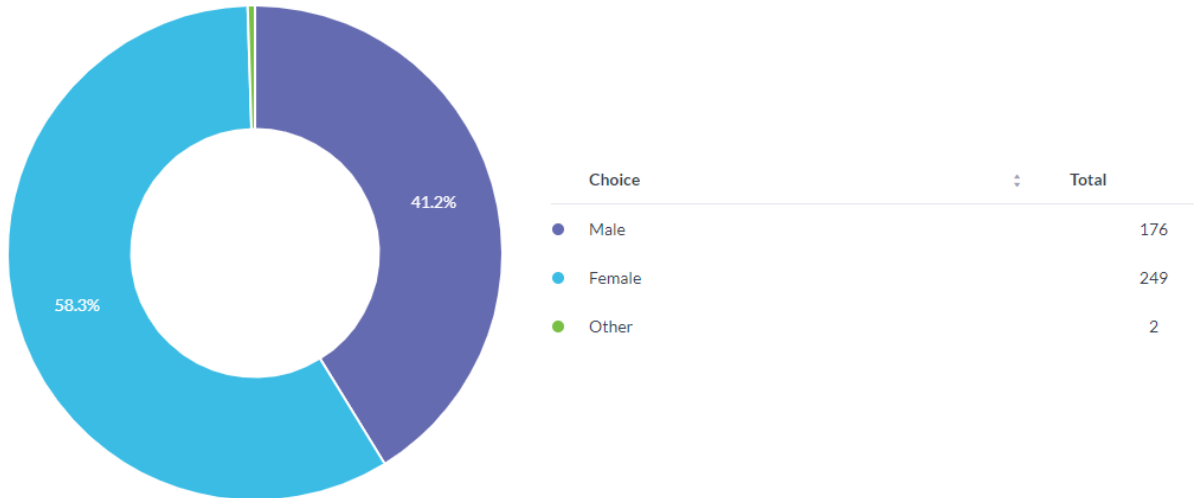
**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

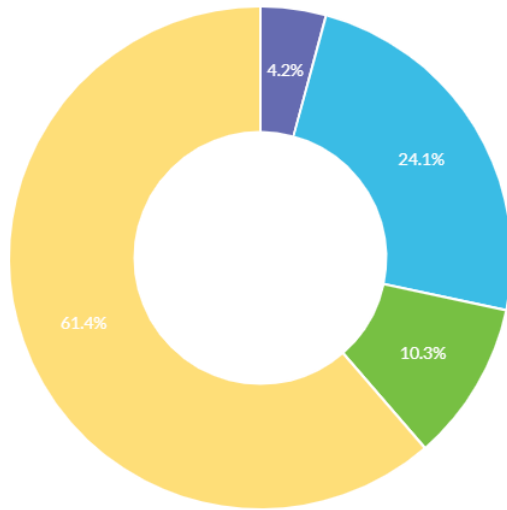
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27. What gender do you most identify with?



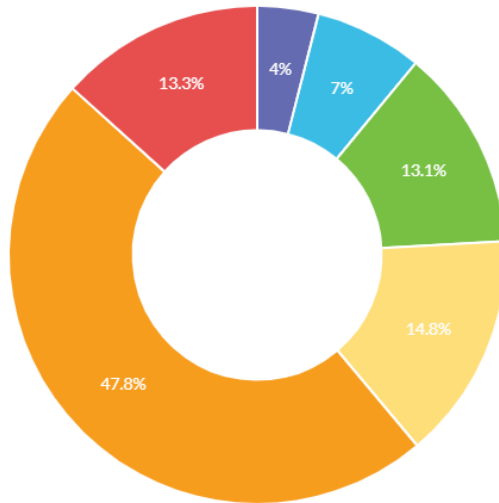
28. What is your employment status?

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan



Choice	Total
Unemployed	18
Retired	103
Employed part-time	44
Employed full-time	262

29. What is your approximate household income (total income of all employed contributing members of the household):



Choice	Total
Under \$20,000	17
\$20,000 to \$40,000	30
\$40,001 to \$60,000	56
\$60,001 to \$80,000	63
Over \$80,000	204
No answer	57

30. Comments/ suggestions relating to improvements, programming, special events, accessibility, campgrounds, volunteerism, rentals and reservations, etc. Examples: What is the most important focus to you for the next five years?

Answer	Tally
Trails- improve/ add	40
Playground	37
Maintain Parks/ facilities/ trails	34
Attach multiuse trails to other trail systems	29
Kid/ family events	29
Splash pad	26

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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Disc Golf	22
Community Events	20
More camping/ more full hook ups/ longer camping	20
Better Advertising	18
Nature activities/ programming	18
More restrooms/ open more	18
Cleaner/ safer parks and bathrooms	17
Amenities (benches, picnic tables)	15
Full day festivals/ movies/ concerts entertainment/ art	15
Expanding Griffin	14
More facilities (shelters, grills, etc)	13
Swimming	12
Pool	12
Maintain Griffin	11
Improve fishing	11
Pickleball	11
Horse trail	11
Kayak rentals (Hawthorn, launch at JI Case, launch at Griffin)	10
Invasives removal	10
Educational signage	8
Accessibility/ handicap parking/ senior equipment	8
Don't charge as much (camping, rentals, PD parking)	8
Friends of Parks volunteer organizations/ how to volunteer	7
Nature center	7
Dog park	7
More signage at Ruble	6
Paved Pump Track	6
Mow ruble	5
Handicap accessible swing (wheelchair)	5
More teen activities	5
Snack stands/ food trucks	5
Better lighting in parks	5
Adult programming/ sports/ bike lessons	5
More Pioneer Village activities	5
More restrooms at Ruble and Wabashiki	4
Another year round shelter rental (like barn)	4
Bike/ skate park in West T	4
River walk/ riverside park	4
Toddler activities	3
Drinking fountains	2
Astrology events	2

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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Firewood	2
Work on back lake at PC	2
Plant natives in parks	2
Build onto West T- nature center, lighting, etc.	2
All day kid activities during school breaks	2
Programmer go to more things for nature education (TH Farmers Market)	2
Train staff in proper nature management	2
Gatehouse at PC	2
Hunting	2
Smaller kids activities	1
Group rides	1
Backpacking primitive camping	1
Observation telescopes at Hawthorn	1
Move Pancake Breakfast inside	1
Addition in North Terre Haute	1
Basketball Goals in every park	1
More use of grounds	1
Keep Hawthorn Gate open	1
Stipend for camphosts	1
Don't allow non campers to have access to campground	1
Allow double booking of campsites	1
Skate parks	1
Get rid of Pioneer Days	1
Pop up rec activities	1
Sculptures at Ruble	1
ATV trails	1

## Needs Analysis

### What is Issue Analysis?

VCPRD is developing this master plan in-house, we are using a combination of methods to analyze the needs of our community and patrons. These methods tallied results from each of 2 public input meetings, a stakeholder meeting, input from the park board and the park staff where we combined the results and placed them in the order above based on the frequency of the items requested. An action plan was then developed based on financial, scheduling and manpower forecasts.

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

### **Requests from Public Input**

- Add new or improve existing trails.
- Add new or improve existing Playground equipment
- Maintain parks facilities and trails
- Attach multiuse trails to other trail systems

Trails are high on our public input section or our surveys and meetings.

### **Issues from Board, Staff and officers; Plus Benchmarking and SWOT Analysis**

- Communication; in 2024 staff structure was changed within maintenance to increase communication.
- Funding; many projects are still slated and in need of a funding source.
- Volunteers; we are always in need of volunteers to help run programs and to assist with maintenance of the parks. Programming and maintenance of trails depends on additional volunteers to help our staff.
- Programming; a variety of outdoor programming to meet the needs not met by other facilities within the city/county. Also, a variety of healthy initiatives to combat our growing physical and mental health crisis within Vigo County both for adults and kids.

### **National and State Standards**

According to the 1983 National Recreation and Park Association's "Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines" by Dr. James Hall and Dr. James Mertes, a county the size of Vigo County should have between 5.0 to 8.0 acres of developed open space per 1,000 residents. Since Vigo County has approximately 106,006 residents, that suggests a recommended minimum of 503.03 acres of land for outdoor recreation use. Vigo County currently has approximately 2,690.17 acres of parkland in its service area. This leaves the VCPRD with a 2,187.14-acre overage in developed open space. As Vigo County continues growing, this overage is likely to shrink. According to the new NRPA's Agency Performance Evaluation the VCPRD still has an overage of Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents. Their standard is 5 to 21 acres with an average of 11 and the VCPRD has 25 acres per 1,000 residents. By their Operating Expenditures per Acre of Parkland



## **Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

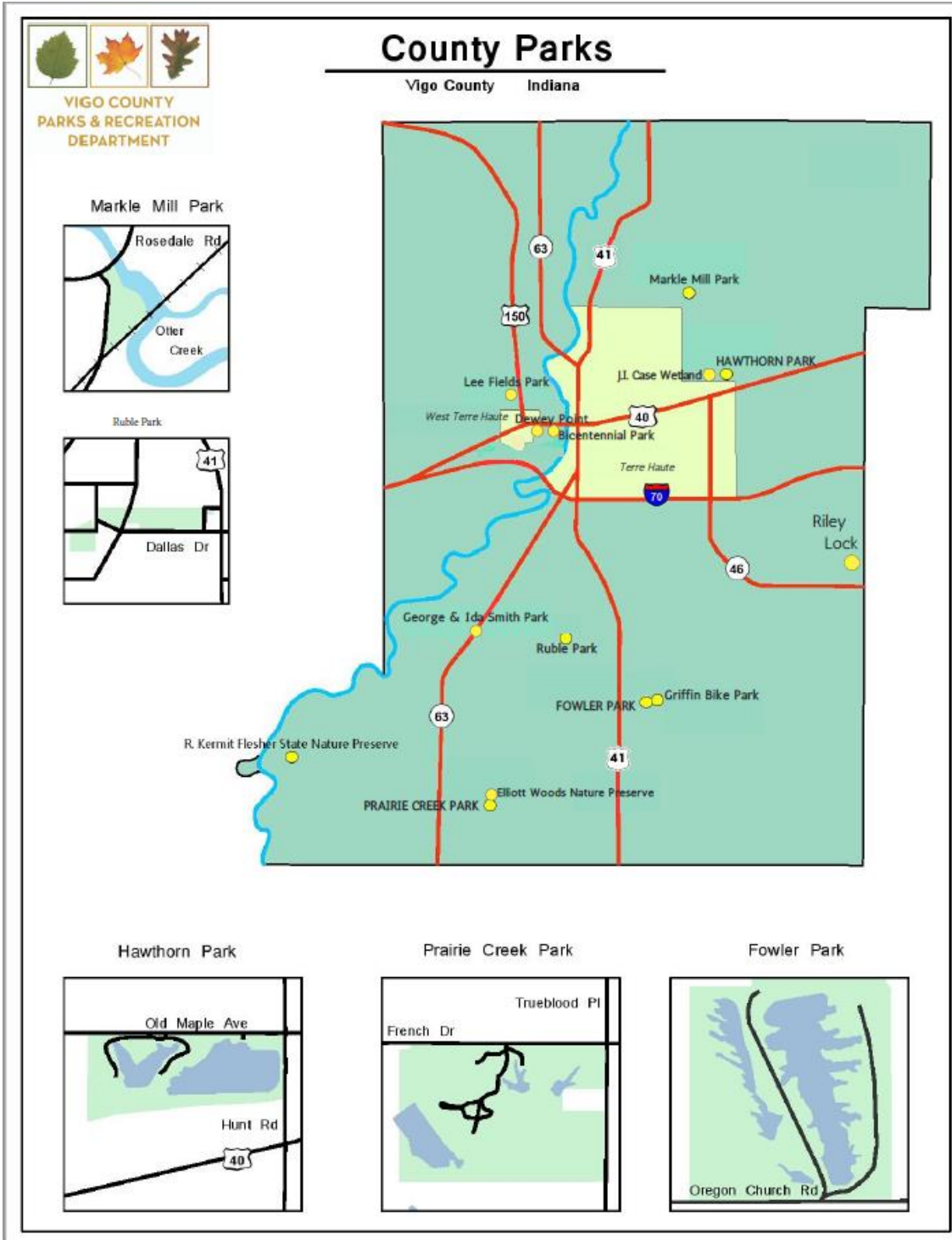
we are below their range of \$5,122 to \$24,576 at \$631. By their Operating Expenditures per Capita range of \$87 to \$249.26 we are again below standard at \$16.02. This will likely continue to get lower with ongoing county budget cuts. By the IDNR's Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) offers a more aspirational LOS standard of 20 acres per 1,000 population for local public outdoor recreation acres; this standard would require a minimum of 2,120.12 acres and leave Vigo County with an overage of 570.05 acres of public park space.

### **What we Need**

- Funding and fundraisers for maintenance and programs and personnel.
- New trails, and playground equipment to meet the wants and needs of the community.
- Programming to meet the needs and wants of the community; outdoor education and health initiatives too.
- Volunteers to help with the workload of maintenance and programming.
- Continued refinement of our department wide communication system and protocols.

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Facilities Location Map



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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## Priorities and Action Schedule

The priorities and action schedule for the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department was developed from a combination of ongoing maintenance, day to day operations, our public, stakeholder, board and staff meetings and a few items we did not complete from our previous master plan as well as funding and manpower considerations. These actions were taken prioritized through community input, staff survey, and internal evaluation.

Priorities for 2025 to 2029 were assigned and put into an action plan as follows:

### VCRD System-wide Action Schedule

#### Part 1: Improvements and Maintenance of Assets

Goal: Ensure that existing and future infrastructure is efficiently managed and maintained

<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM</b>
<b>SYSTEM-WIDE</b>		
Install interpretative signage in all parks.	Ongoing	Grants
Continue invasive species eradication to enhance the health and beauty of the forests and scenic views.	Ongoing	Grants
Remove dead trees in areas where they pose a hazard and continue tree replacement schedule.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Install signage related to accessible features in parks.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Continued maintenance of roadways and facilities.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Research design and placement of additional picnic and seating areas	2027	Operating Budget
Exploring additional overnight rental accommodations	2028	Operating Budget
<b>BICENTENNIAL PARK/DEWEY POINT AND WABASHIKI TRAIL</b>		
Continue voluntary property acquisition to complete the river walk and establish the connection to the Wabashiki trail.	Ongoing	Land Acquisition Fund/ Grants
Install additional amenities to encourage water recreation, social gatherings and wildlife viewing	2026	Operating Budget
Improve the scenic river view by removing invasive species and dead trees.	Ongoing	In-house
Look into additional environmentally sensitive lighting at the Dewey Point Trail Head.	2025	Operating Budget
Continue ongoing partnership with Indiana State University for perpetual maintenance of the trail	Ongoing	Grants/ Partnership

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Development of Bicentennial Park frontage	2026	Grants/ Partnership
Continue regular trail maintenance	Ongoing	In-house
Continue development of a Little League Field	2025	Grants/ Partnerships
<b>ELLIOTT WOODS NATURE PRESERVE</b>		
Continue work on Bridge projects.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Perform resurfacing trail work to enhance seasonal access to trail.	2026	Operating Budget

**Part 1 (Continued): Improvements and Maintenance of Assets**

Goal: Ensure that existing and future infrastructure is efficiently managed and maintained

<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM</b>
<b>ERIE CANAL LOCK PROPERTY</b>		
In process of creating a parking area, installing historical informational signage and performing trail work.	2025	Operating Budget/EDIT
<b>FOWLER PARK</b>		
Conduct maintenance on Pioneer Village cabins and associated features.	Ongoing	Endowment Fund
Explore installation of accessible campsites.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Install new Bentlinger playground.	2026	Grants/Donations
Install new Disc Golf course/ trails	2028	Donation/ Partnerships
Continue partnership with Village Folk to conduct programming and historic preservation	Ongoing	Partnership
Exploring additional overnight rental accommodations	2028	Operating Budget
Explore additional direct water hookup campsites	2029	Operating Budget/EDIT
<b>GEORGE &amp; IDA SMITH PARK (PRAIRIETON PARK)</b>		
Resurface parking area.	2025	Operating Budget
<b>R. KERMIT FLESHER STATE NATURE PRESERVE</b>		
Install new park signage.	2025	Operating Budget
<b>RUBLE PARK</b>		
Manage prairie grasses on rotation.	Ongoing	In-house
Add picnic areas and benches.	2026	Operating Budget
Continue to develop trail maintenance plan.	Ongoing	In-house
<b>LEE FIELDS PARK</b>		

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Install water hookups to be used for drinking fountains and other uses.	2027	Operating Budget
Explore recreational opportunities.	Ongoing	In-house
<b>MARKLE MILL PARK</b>		
Explore installation of kayak/canoe entrance.	2027	Operating Budget
Explore kayak rental opportunities.	2027	Operating Budget
<b>GRIFFIN BIKE PARK</b>		
Continue to work with Shepherds of Griffin Bike Park to identify and apply for funding.	Ongoing	Partnership
Install trail feature upgrades to enhance the user experience.	Ongoing	Donations

**Part 1 (Continued): Improvements and Maintenance of Assets**

Goal: Ensure that existing and future infrastructure is efficiently managed and maintained

<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM</b>
<b>GRIFFIN BIKE PARK (CONTINUED)</b>		
Partner with volunteer groups to facilitate events.	Ongoing	Partnership
Improve lighting and parking in the Landing Zone.	2025	Health Department/ EDIT/ ARPA
Pave pump track.	2025	Health Department/ EDIT/ ARPA
Obtain and establish system for offering rental bikes for charge.	2025	Health Department/ EDIT/ ARPA
Explore and determine partner for economic impact study.	2026	Donations
Increase and explore kids programming and clinics.	2026	Donations/ Partnership
Explore rental options.	2025	In-house
Exploring additional overnight rental accommodations	2028	Operating Budget
<b>HAWTHORN PARK/ J.I. CASE WETLAND</b>		
Explore keeping archery range.	2027	In-house
Re-surface paved trails.	2026	Operating Budget/ EDIT
Explore installation of accessible campsites.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Explore other recreational opportunities.	2028	In-house
Continue to partner with recreational groups.	Ongoing	Partnership
Explore kayak rental opportunities.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Refurbish the observation deck at J.I. Case Wetland.	2025	Operating Budget
Explore the addition of access to J.I. Case Wetlands.	2027	Operating Budget

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Add educational interpretive signage to J.I. Case Wetlands.	2026	Operating Budget
Exploring additional overnight rental accommodations	2028	Operating Budget
Explore additional direct water hookup campsites	2029	Operating Budget/EDIT

**Part 1 (Continued): Improvements and Maintenance of Assets**

Goal: Ensure that existing and future infrastructure is efficiently managed and maintained

<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM</b>
<b>PRAIRIE CREEK PARK</b>		
Continue monitoring value-added and tradeoff of education added maple syrup services (revenues, programming, stewardship). Adjust production accordingly.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Mark historic gravesite with educational signage.	2026	Operating Budget
Repair and restore bridges.	2028	Operating Budget
Resurface and re-slope boat ramp.	2027	Operating Budget
Complete historic bridge to Persimmon Shelter	2027	Operating Budget
Install accessible features to the playground.	2025	Operating Budget
Explore installation of accessible campsites.	Ongoing	Operating Budget
Exploring additional overnight rental accommodations	2028	Operating Budget
Explore additional direct water hookup campsites	2029	Operating Budget/EDIT

**Part 2: Community-Driven Programming**

Goal: Create, maintain and advertise responsive programming for the community

<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM</b>

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MARKETING		
Use Google maps data to showcase “Google trail view” of park trails.	Ongoing	Partnership
Gather and review all marketing materials and identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.	Ongoing	In-house
Implement enhanced process for marketing programs and services.	Ongoing	In-house
Utilize groups to create marketing material specific to Griffin Bike Park that target biking communities in the region.	Ongoing	Partnership

**Part 2: Community-Driven Programming**

Goal: Create, maintain and advertise responsive programming for the community

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM
<b>MARKETING (CONTINUED)</b>		
Create an email newsletter to increase awareness of department programming and amenities.	2025	Operating Budget
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>		
Survey existing park patrons about specific special events and outdoor/nature programming desired in the community.	Ongoing	Non-reverting Funds
Implement at least one new outdoor/environmental youth program (to address identified need in community survey).	Ongoing	Non-reverting Funds
Implement at least one new program that reaches a population not historically reached by the department.	Ongoing	Non-reverting Funds
Initiate one family-oriented running/walking event that utilizes department trails and brings awareness to department assets.	Ongoing	Non-reverting Funds
Once participant email list is established, explore the desire for adopt-a-neighborhood park program (similar to neighborhood watch program).	Ongoing	Non-reverting Funds

**Part 3: Staffing and Operations Management**

Goal: Improve organizational capacity through thoughtful leadership and planning for improved operations

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM
<b>STAFFING</b>		
Continue monthly staff meetings in order to identify any barriers and solutions to challenges.	Ongoing	In-house

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Explore opportunities for staff training/development and identify/provide at least one applicable training every other year to full-time staff.	Ongoing	In-house
In January each year, hold a staff meeting to review the master plan and adjust the plan for the upcoming year.	Ongoing	In-house
Facilitate employee evaluations every January.	Ongoing	In-house

**Part 3 (Continued): Staffing and Operations Management**

Goal: Improve organizational capacity through thoughtful leadership and planning for improved operations

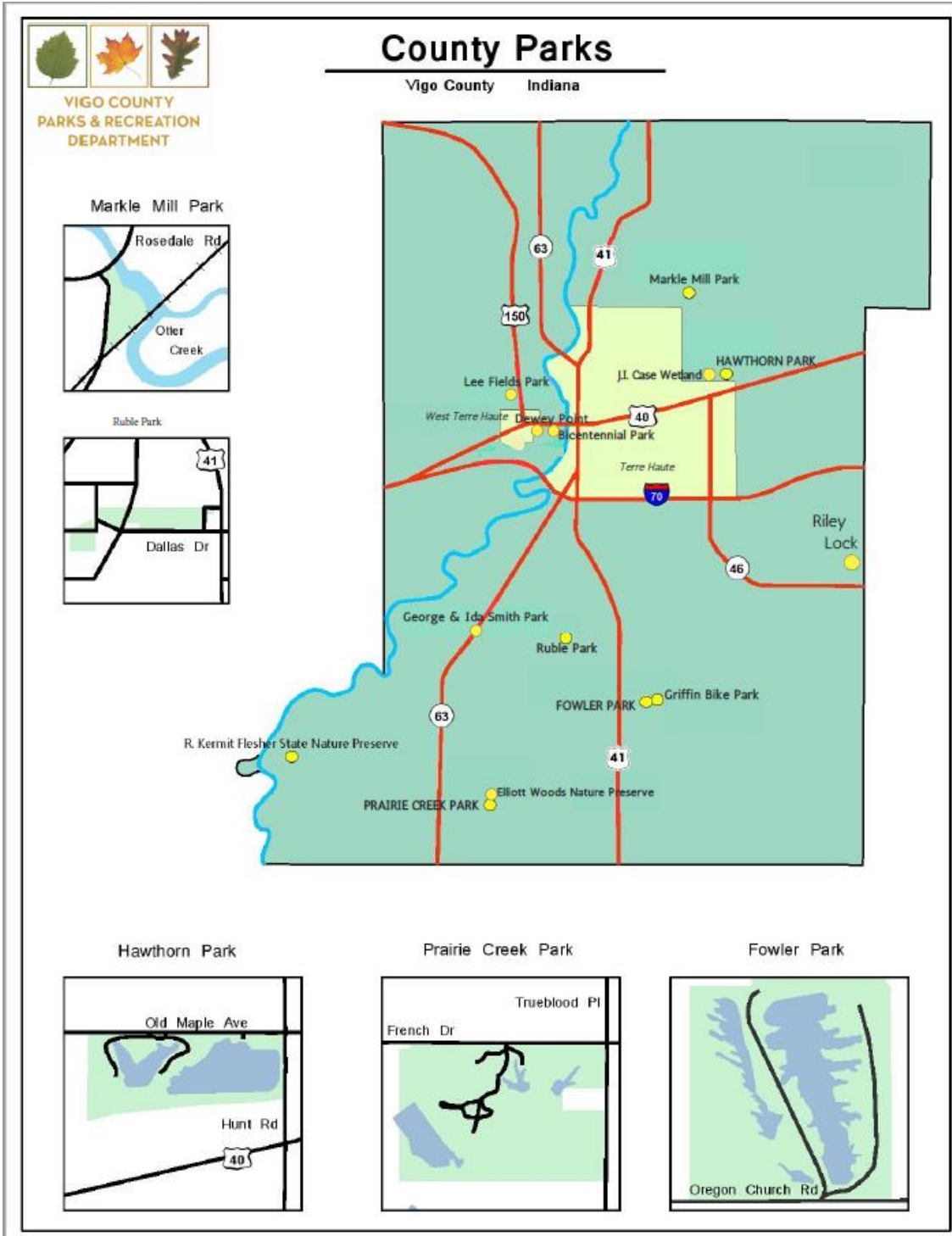
<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE FUNDING MECHANISM</b>
<b>STAFFING (CONTINUED)</b>		
Develop a staffing plan that considers future department needs.	Ongoing	In-house
Explore new on-boarding/recruiting opportunities for seasonal employment.	Ongoing	In-house
<b>OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT</b>		
Utilize 2024-2029 Department Master Plan during monthly meetings and board updates.	Ongoing	In-house
Continue to identify partnerships and volunteers to help with park clean-up and gardening.	Ongoing	In-house
Annually assess fees for all programs and services.	Ongoing	In-house
Continue with the replacement plan for aging equipment (heavy equipment, lawn mowers, tractors, etc.).	Ongoing	In-house
Continue with implement a vehicle maintenance and repair plan.	Ongoing	In-house
Continue with the regular playground maintenance inspection program to more closely monitor equipment and surfacing.	Ongoing	In-house



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Appendices

Vigo County Regional Map



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Vigo County Park Maps

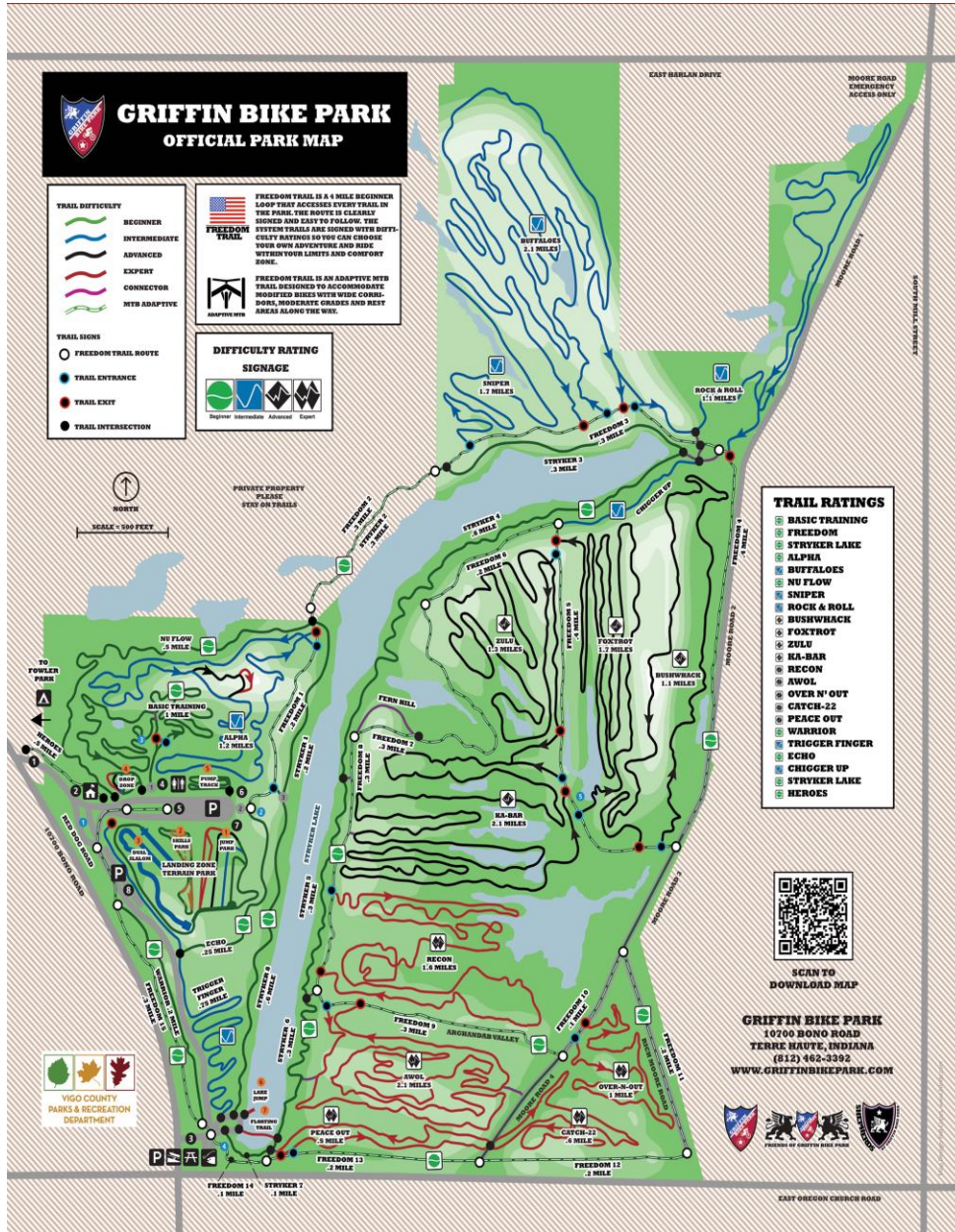
Fowler Park



Griffin Bike Park



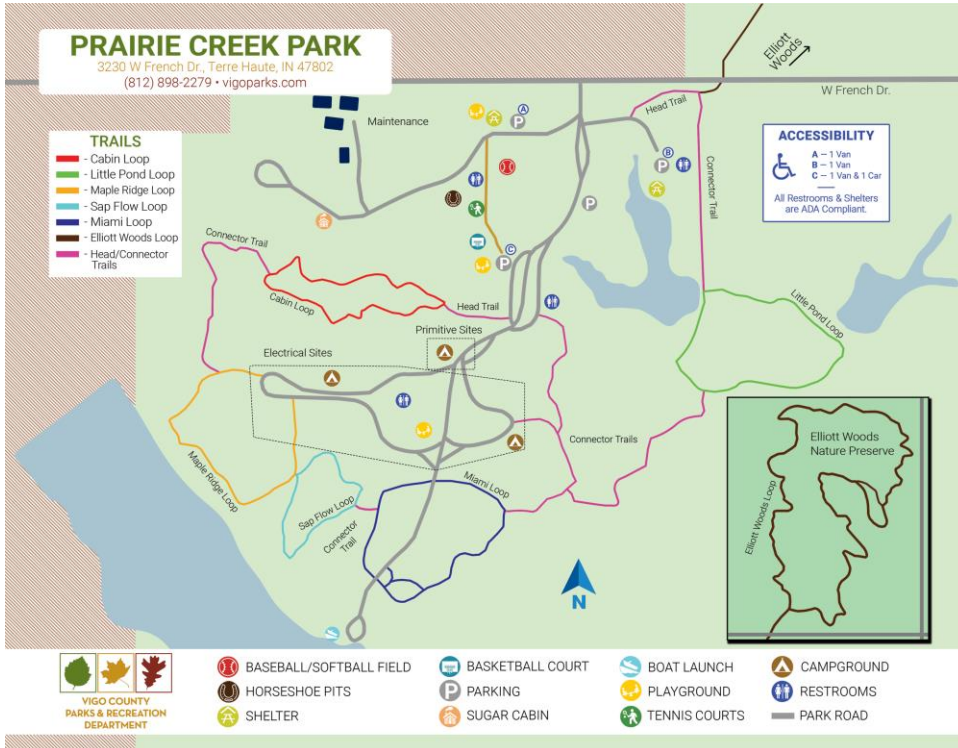
## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan



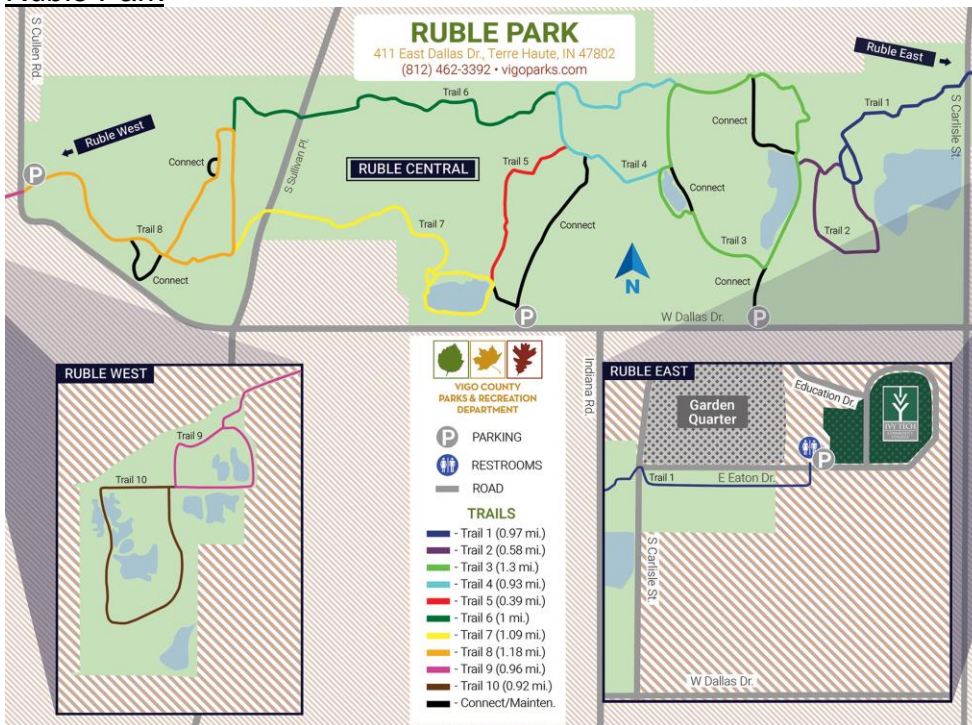
Prairie Creek Park



# Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan



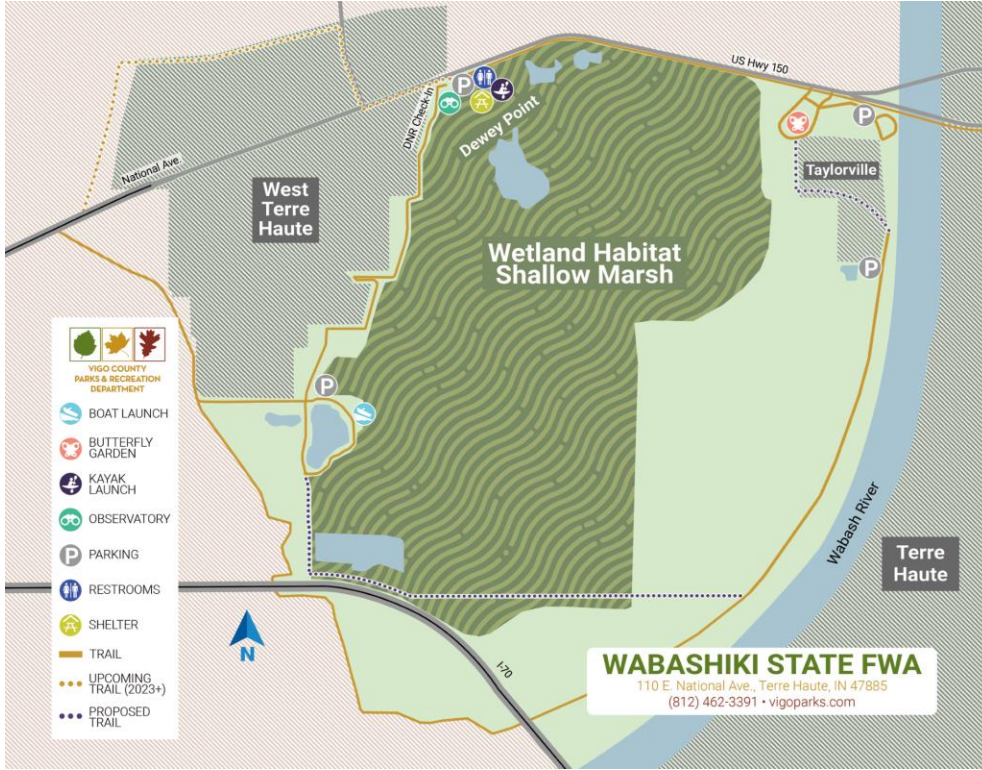
## Ruble Park



## Wabashki State FWA



# Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan



## Hawthorn Park



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department**  
**5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

***SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis***

Analysis made by VCPRD staff in Fall of 2024

**INTERNAL FACTORS**

**Strengths:**

- With ten parks to maintain/operate. VCPRD is smaller department with well trained that that work well together and can mobilize to handle most problems or events.
- With 3 friend's groups and 4 colleges to draw volunteers from we are lucky to have a larger base to get help from.
- A highly skilled and versatile full-time park staff.
- We have a long serving park board who take great pride in our parks system and get out and assist and attend at out park.
- Our parks are very well attended. With festivals, races, kids events and other recreational opportunities.
- The previous Master Plan required a heavy focus on updates to aging and failing infrastructure. With the required updates completed this leaves room for growth within the parks to meet new community needs.

**Weaknesses:**

- Ongoing rise in costs of building materials, labor and inflation.
- Community Communications, we are struggling to get our information on events, meetings, and important dates out. Finding the correct avenue to reach the largest sector of our community has become problematic with too many venues to receive info from.
- Lack of accessible routes to parks. Most of our parks on on county roads with little to no access to walkers or bikes. However, this is being worked on currently by other parties and non motorized connectivity is closer than ever.
- Due to ongoing budget cuts, we run on a bare minimum staff. We could use funding for more qualified staffing at some of our facilities.

**EXTERNAL FACTORS**

**Opportunities:**

- Griffin Bike Park is building a new Community Hub funded by ARPA, Edit and Healthy Initiative funds that will provide an indoor facility to create more programming for adults and children alike.
- THRIVE West Central is partnering with VCPRD to provide bus service to our parks for future events and programs.

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

- Purdue Extensions has offered to partner with VCPRD to create an official joint use agreement to share outdoor recreation facilities and programs, as well as programming opportunities.
- The Vigo County Health Department is helping us with Health First Indiana funds to assist with new dynamic programming at Griffin Bike Park and other parks.

### Threats:

- The continued spread of invasive species overruns natives within the parks and threatens park space. Efforts to mitigate invasive species are both time consuming and labor intensive.
- Changing and volatile marketing campaigns and solicitation for new patrons makes it difficult to attract new visitors for the parks and events.
- Opioid use, mental health issues and homelessness in the greater Terre Haute area is skyrocketing, and Vigo County is faced with a crisis of overdoses, needle disposal issues causing camping problems within the county and parks.
- Vigo County has been recognized as one of the unhealthiest counties in Indiana by countyhealthrankings.org. Ranking low in every category.

### BRAINSTORMING AND ANALYSIS

#### Ideas from the SWOT:

- Show the health advantages, economic impact and potential new business and population growth that County parks have on our local community to illustrate to new county council members the value of the investment in the Parks.
- Create a fundraising platform to draw both new and existing donors to fund new and exciting projects in our parks.
- Use our existing volunteer and friends group work to improve maintenance of park features and assist with programs. And find innovative ways to honor those volunteers and help recruit more.
- Continue and grow cooperative efforts between the VCPRD and the Vigo County Schools, Purdue Extensions, and the Vigo County Health Department (anti-drug programs, HFI, obesity programs, wellness programs, etc.).

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- Consider expanding programs in VCPRD parks that emphasize the sports and activities that the city does not offer (such as mountain biking, disc golf, fishing, and hiking).
- Seek out continuing education and guidance for marketing of our events and programs to further get our information out to the public.

***Community Benchmarking: Vigo County; LaPorte County; and Monroe County, IN***

Community:	Vigo County, IN	LaPorte County, IN	Monroe County, IN
Population	106,153	83,831	139,342
Median household Income	\$52,789	\$62,014	\$60,308
% population growth since last Census	0.0%	0.2%	-0.3%
Number of Parks	10	5	4
Total Acres of Public Park Land	2,700	502	352
Yearly Park Expenditure per Capita	\$16.86	\$4.97	\$11.35

If you divide each community’s yearly park budget by their population, you get the yearly park expenditure per capita; a measure that allows you to compare how much financial support each community affords their parks. Vigo County spends \$16.86 per resident, Monroe County spends \$11.35 per resident, while LaPorte spends the least, at \$4.97 per resident. When we compare the communities, we can see that Vigo County spends the most on its parks per capita, while also having the highest number of parks and largest acreage of parks, despite having the lowest median household income.



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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**Accessibility Compliance Sign-Off Sheet**

**ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:  
ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended);  
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As  
Amended);  
AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT  
OF 1990 (As Amended)**

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

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICANT PRESIDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
(President's printed name)

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Secretary's printed name)

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

***Board Resolution Adopting Plan***

WHEREAS, the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Board is aware of the parks and recreation needs of the residents of Vigo County Indiana, and

WHEREAS, the Board realizes the importance of sound planning in order to meet the needs of its citizens,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE VIGO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD, by unanimous declaration, does adopt the Vigo County 5-year Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan as its official plan for the next five years, for the growth and development of parks and recreational opportunities in Vigo County.

Passed and signed this th day of , 20 .

ATTEST:

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department Board President

Date

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department Attorney

Date



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

## **Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 202 Public Survey**

155 Oak St  
Terre Haute, IN 47807  
(812) 462-3392

Thank you for participating in the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department's Master Plan survey for our upcoming 2025-2029 Master Plan. This survey will help us find out more information on how our parks are utilized and what about them you enjoy. This is also your chance to offer your input in what changes you would like to see within our county parks system for our next 5-year Master Plan.

All information gathered is completely confidential. No information from these surveys will be used for any purpose other than park planning.

1. How often do you use the Vigo County parks? (Fowler Park, Prairie Creek Park, Griffin Bike Park, Ruble Park, Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park, Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetland, Lee Fields Park, Markle Mill Park, George and Ida Smith Park and R. Kermit Flesher Memorial Nature Preserve)

- Every Day
- 4 or 5 times a week
- 3 or fewer times a week
- Once or twice a year
- Once or twice a month
- Never

2. Which County parks, trails, facilities have your or a member of your household visited in the past year?

- Fowler Park
- Griffin Bike Park
- Ruble Park
- Prairie Creek Park
- Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetland
- Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park
- Lee Fields Park
- Markle Mill Park
- George and Ida Smith Park (Prairieton Park)
- R. Kermit Flesher Memorial Nature Preserve

3. What amenities have you utilized at Fowler Park in the last year?

- Campgrounds
- Park trails
- Playgrounds
- Log Barn

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- Canoe/ Kayak Rental
  - Boat Ramp
  - Pioneer Village
  - Ruble Lake
  - Picnic/ rental shelters
  - Swimming Beach
  - Fishing
  - Other
4. What amenities have you used at Griffin Bike Park in the past year?
- Pump Track
  - Hiking
  - Fishing
  - Jump lines
  - Memorial Visit
  - Trail riding
  - Running
  - Boating, kayaking, canoeing
  - Dual Slalom
  - Other
5. What amenities have you used at Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetlands in the past year?
- Campgrounds
  - Kenny E. Smith Memorial Labyrinth and Meditation Garden
  - Fishing pier
  - Archery fields
  - Outdoor workout equipment
  - Trails
  - Playground
  - Picnic shelters
  - National Heritage Trail Access
  - Boating, kayaking, canoeing
  - Other
6. What amenities have you utilized at Prairie Creek Park in the last year?
- Baseball/ softball field
  - Boat ramp
  - Fishing
  - Maple sugar cabin
  - Playgrounds
  - Basketball court
  - Campgrounds
  - Park trails/ Elliott Woods Nature Area trails
  - Picnic/ rental shelters
  - Tennis courts
  - Other

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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7. What amenities have you utilized at Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park in the last year?
- Biking
  - Wabashiki trail
  - Boat launch
  - Picnic shelter
  - Butterfly garden
  - Emily's Walk Wildlife Viewing Scope/ Interpretive Kiosk
  - Kayak/ canoe launch
  - Wetlands
  - Other
8. What amenities have you utilized at Ruble Park in the last year?
- Bird watching
  - Wildlife viewing
  - Hiking trails
  - Lowland boardwalk
  - Other
9. How would you rate the general upkeep and maintenance of the existing Vigo County Parks?
- Excellent
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Poor
  - Don't Know
10. What are the primary reasons that you use the Vigo County Parks?
- Enjoy the outdoors or nature
  - Play sports
  - Use specific park rental facilities
  - Bird/ Wildlife observation
  - Historical or cultural attractions
  - Fishing
  - Mountain Biking
  - Walk, hike or bike for exercise
  - Participate in family activities
  - Meet friends
  - Camping
  - Attend programs or special events
  - Don't use parks
  - Other
11. If you seldom use or do not use the Vigo County parks, what are your reasons? Please check your top 2 choices
- Too far away/ not conveniently located
  - Too crowded
  - Feel unsafe
  - Poorly maintained

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

- Lack of facilities
  - Don't know where they are
  - Not interested
  - Don't have transportation
  - No time
  - Don't know what's available
  - Other
12. How would you rate the importance of natural open space to the community?
- Very important
  - Important
  - Somewhat important
  - Not very important
  - Not important at all
  - Don't know
13. I would like to see the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department add the following things to our county parks (please check all that apply):
- More accessible play equipment and facilities
  - More walking trails/ paths
  - More benches/ shelters/ gathering areas
  - More programs/ activities
  - Other
14. What are the most convenient program times for you and others in your household? Can select multiple
- Weekday morning
  - Weekday afternoons
  - Weekday evenings
  - Weekend mornings
  - Weekend afternoons
  - Weekend evenings
15. If you do not participate in park programs or special events offered by the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department, what are your reasons?
- Not aware of program
  - Don't have activities I'm interested in
  - Too expensive
  - Poor quality of programs
  - Not accessible for people with disabilities
  - Too busy/ no time
  - Held at inconvenient times
  - Need childcare in order to participate
  - Held at inconvenient locations
  - Lack of transportation

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

16. The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department offers or co-sponsors the special events listed below. Please check ALL the special events that you and/ or members of your household have attended in the past 2 years.

- Pioneer Days
- Movie in the Park
- Pancake Breakfast
- Griffin Bike Park Camp
- Hawthorn Hayrides
- Fowler Park After Dark
- Christmas Walk
- Summer in the Village
- Griffin Bike Park races
- Youth Adventure Camp
- Fowler Park Hayrides
- Kids/ family hikes

17. Select the activities you would like to do most. Assume you have the time, money and transportation.

- Walking, jogging/ running, cycling or hiking/ backing for pleasure
- Swimming, beach activities
- Playground visits/ play, picnicking
- Historical reenactments, woodworking, hands on activities
- Fishing, boating, kayaking/ canoeing
- Camping
- Photography, wildlife and bird watching
- Outdoor sports: baseball/ softball, cornhole, pickleball, archery, soccer, basketball, mountain biking
- Other

18. How would you rate the activities, programs and special events provided by the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department?

- Excellent. There are many opportunities to do all or most of the activities and programs I enjoy.
- Very good. There are several opportunities to do many of the recreation activities and programs I enjoy.
- Satisfactory. There are some opportunities to do the recreation activities and programs I enjoy.
- Not very good. There are few opportunities to do the recreation activities and programs I enjoy.
- Inadequate. There are no opportunities to do any of the recreation activities and programs I enjoy.
- Not sure. I don't know what is offered.



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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19. What additional recreation programs do you feel the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department should offer or expand? Please select all that apply

- Outdoor/ Environmental programs
- Sports (kickball, ultimate frisbee, disc golf, etc.)
- Arts (painting in the parks, drama, music, etc.)
- Individual or team adventure races
- Family or kids programs
- Fitness classes (aerobics, yoga, etc.)
- Special events (concerts in the parks, movies, festivals, tournaments, etc.)
- Outdoor recreation tournaments (cornhole, basketball, beach volleyball, etc.)
- No additional programs are needed
- Other

20. What is the best way for your household to receive information on parks and recreation facilities, services and programs? Check all that apply

- County website
- Park bulletin boards
- Newspaper
- Other online sites
- Radio
- From friend or word of mouth
- Park board or County Council meetings
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Television
- Posters/ flyers/ banners
- Other

21. If additional funding were available for the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to fund capital development of parks and trails, how would you allocate the funding among the competing categories below? Enter a PERCENTAGE for each category and make your total allocation equal 100%.

- Improve quality of existing parks
- Land (acquisition only) for park development
- Other amenities

22. After first applying for all available grants and donations, how would you like the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department to pay for new amenities in the parks?

- Use existing budget
- Municipal Bonds
- New taxes/ fees
- All of the above

23. How do you feel the pricing on camping, amenity rentals and programs is?

- Too high

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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- Just right
- Too low
- Don't know

24. Do you live, work or go to school in Vigo County? Choose all that apply.

- Resident of Vigo County
- Work in Vigo County
- I am a college student attending a college or university in Vigo County

25. Please input your current residential zip code

26. Please write the total number of people in your household (including children) within each age category in the table below. This helps us plan for parks needs based on who is using or may use the parks and facilities.

- 0 – 10 years
- 10 – 18 years
- 18 – 30 years
- 30 – 50 years
- 50 – 70 years
- 70+

27. What gender do you most identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Other

28. What is your employment status?

- Unemployed
- Retired
- Employed part-time
- Employed full-time

29. What is your approximate household income (total income of all employed contributing members of the household):

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 to \$40,000
- \$40,001 to \$60,000
- \$60,001 to \$80,000
- Over \$80,000
- No answer

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

30. Comments/ suggestions relating to improvements, programming, special events, accessibility, campgrounds, volunteerism, rentals and reservations, etc. Examples: What is the most important focus to you for the next five years?

*Thank you for your participation!*

### **News notices, articles, sign-in sheets and meeting info**

#### News articles

Channel 2 WTWO Reporter; “Vigo County Parks seeking feedback for 5-year Master Plan”; May 10, 2024 (copy of article included here).

<https://www.mywabashvalley.com/news/local-news/vigo-co-parks-seeking-feedback-for-5-year-master-plan/>

VIGO COUNTY, Ind. (WTWO/WAWV) — As the Vigo County Parks Department looks ahead at the next five years, they want the community to be a massive part of the decision-making process.

The department’s superintendent Adam Grossman explains how they plan to do so.

“We will go over the last five years, some successes, some things we have learned, look at the current survey numbers to see what people are saying, what do people want, and get their input to guide these next five years,” he said.

Grossman said he will always want the parks to cater to what the community enjoys the most.

“We are here to serve the public and we are here to make sure that we have the health benefit for the county,” he said. “What do they want to see to get people outside? That is what we want to see in the county parks. We want to see people biking, running, fishing, and camping.”

Vigo County commissioner Chris Switzer said that the county parks are a great gateway to all the great things in Vigo County.

“It is great to get people from outside of our community into Vigo County and visit to see all of the things that Vigo County has to offer. Our parks department isn’t only about health and fitness and getting everybody outside, it is more about economic development and getting people to realize the good things that are going on in Vigo County,” he said.

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

Switzer said this strategy is a win for all parties involved.

“It is awesome that he takes all that input and puts all that stuff together and collaborates with other entities within the walls of Vigo County to make sure we are doing what is best for the community moving forward,” he said.

The link to the survey the parks department is conducting can be found [here](#).

The first of three public meetings about this plan will be held at the log barn at Fowler Park at 6 p.m. on May 13.

Channel 10 WTHI Reporter; “You have two more chances to give your feedback for the Vigo County Parks master plan”; May 10, 2024 (copy of article included here).

[https://www.wthitv.com/news/you-have-two-more-chances-to-give-your-feedback-for-the-vigo-county-parks-masterplan/article\\_1da5bc56-0eee-11ef-a0a0-6b2386f70a12.html](https://www.wthitv.com/news/you-have-two-more-chances-to-give-your-feedback-for-the-vigo-county-parks-masterplan/article_1da5bc56-0eee-11ef-a0a0-6b2386f70a12.html)

VIGO COUNTY, Ind. (WTHI) - People have two remaining chances to give their input for the Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department's master planning process.

On Friday, the department announced its final two public meetings. Members of the public can take part in electronic surveys at the meetings to give their feedback. The department will analyze the data and put it into an actionable plan.

The department hopes to present a final draft at a meeting in December.

The next meeting is Monday, May 13 at Fowler Park in the log barn at 6 p.m. The final meeting will be on June 27 at the Vigo County Annex Council Chambers at 6 p.m.

### Public meeting and Survey notices posted to website

The following notices were posted on our Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department Website ([vigoparks.org](http://vigoparks.org)) beginning on May 3, 2024.

- May 3, 2024 9:41 am

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

- May 8, 2024 3: 36 pm
- May 31, 2024 10:00 am
- June 14, 2024 2:00 pm
- June 27, 2024 10:00 am

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department has begun writing our 2025-2029 Master Plan. As part of that process we have created a survey for the public to participate in so that you can provide your input in what you would like to see out of our parks in the next 5 years. There will also be a chance for you to attend a public meeting with the first being on May 13th at 6 p.m. in the Fowler Park Log Barn. As you start your survey, please keep in mind that our parks include:

Fowler Park

Prairie Creek Park

Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetlands

Griffin Bike Park

Ruble Park

Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park at Wabashiki State Fish and Wildlife Area

Markle Mill Park

George and Ida Smith Park

Lee Fields Park

and the R. Kermit Flesher Memorial State Nature Preserve

We thank you for your time and input!

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department has started the process of planning and writing our next 5-year Master Plan for 2025 – 2029. We invite the public to provide their input on our park successes over the last 5 years along with what they would like to see out of the parks in the next 5 years. The first public meeting will be held Monday, May 13th at 6:00 p.m. at Fowler Park in the Log Barn and the second public meeting will be held June 27th at 6:00 p.m. in the Vigo County Council Chambers at the Vigo County Annex. There is a survey, link provided below, for the public to participate in. This can be completed on

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

your own or there will be tablets at the public meetings for people to take the survey on then. For any questions they can contact the office at 812-462-3392.

### Public meeting and Survey notices posted to Facebook

The following notices were posted on our Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department Facebook ([facebook.com/VCPRD](https://facebook.com/VCPRD)) and Griffin Bike Park Facebook ([facebook.com/griffinbikeparkIN](https://facebook.com/griffinbikeparkIN)) beginning on May 3, 2024.

#### Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department Facebook

- May 1, 2024 2:00 pm
- May 6, 2024 3:03 pm
- May 13, 2024 2:00 pm
- May 22, 2024 2:00 pm
- June 5, 2024 5:00 pm
- June 13, 2024 2:00 pm
- June 18, 2024 5:00 pm
- June 24, 2024 5:00 pm
- June 27, 2024 10:00 am

#### Griffin Bike Park Facebook

- May 8, 12:00 pm
- June 5, 2024 2:00 pm
- June 14, 2024 2:00 pm
- June 21, 2024 2:00 pm
- June 27, 2024 2:00 pm

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department has begun writing our 2025-2029 Master Plan. As part of that process we have created a survey for the

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

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We have a very busy month this month in the parks, but we want to take a moment to remind everyone that our Public Survey for our 2025 - 2029 Master Plan is still available through the end of June for you to take. It is linked for you below, if you do not have internet at home to take it you can do so on an iPad

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department**  
**5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

available at our final public meeting on June 27th at 6 pm in the Vigo County Council Chambers. We also want to remind folks that our parks include:

Fowler Park

Prairie Creek Park

Hawthorn Park & J.I. Case Wetlands

Griffin Bike Park

Ruble Park

Dewey Point/ Bicentennial Park at Wabashiki State Fish and Wildlife Area

Markle Mill Park

George and Ida Smith Park

Lee Fields Park

and the R. Kermit Flesher Memorial State Nature Preserve

If we do not own that park we are unfortunately unable to include it in our Master Plan or our Survey.

We thank you for your time and input!

Public meeting and Survey notices posted to Facebook

The following Press Release was sent out to Channel 2 WTWO, Channel 10 WTHI, Channel 6 news, JDL Broadcasting, WTIU Indiana, WMHD Radio, WLF1 news, Depauw news, Channel 14 news, the Tribune Star Newspaper, the City of Terre Haute, Clay City news and the Vigo County Commissioner Calendar.

Media Contact:

Heather Cosme Milian

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department

812-462-3392

[Heather.milian@vigocounty.in.gov](mailto:Heather.milian@vigocounty.in.gov)

Release Date:

5/8/2024

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

2025 – 2029 Master Plan Public Input Meetings



**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department has started the process of planning and writing our next 5-year Master Plan for 2025 – 2029. We invite the public to provide their input on our park successes over the last 5 years along with what they would like to see out of the parks in the next 5 years. The first public meeting will be held Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Fowler Park in the Log Barn and the second public meeting will be held June 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Vigo County Council Chambers at the Vigo County Annex. There is a survey, link provided below, for the public to participate in. This can be completed on their own or there will be tablets at the public meetings for people to take the survey on then. For any questions they can contact the office at 812-462-3392 or visit [www.vigoparks.org](http://www.vigoparks.org).

Survey: <https://s.surveypplanet.com/p6cdcc6p>

Media Contact:

Heather Cosme Milian

Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department

812-462-3392

[Heather.milian@vigocounty.in.gov](mailto:Heather.milian@vigocounty.in.gov)

Release Date:

6/24/2024

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

2025 – 2029 Master Plan Public Input Meetings

The Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department has started the process of planning and writing our next 5-year Master Plan for 2025 – 2029. We invite the public to provide their input on our park successes over the last 5 years along with what they would like to see out of the parks in the next 5 years. The first public meeting will be held Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Fowler Park in the Log Barn and the second public meeting will be held June 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Vigo County Council Chambers at the Vigo County Annex. There is a survey, link provided below, for the public to participate in. This can be completed on their own or there will be tablets at the public meetings for people to take the survey on then. For any questions they can contact the office at 812-462-3392 or visit [www.vigoparks.org](http://www.vigoparks.org).

Survey: <https://s.surveypplanet.com/p6cdcc6p>

Sign-in sheets, agendas and meetings (by date)

Attendance for May 9, 2024 stakeholders meeting, agenda and meeting

Name	Affiliation	Attended
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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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Clint Griffin	Griffin Family	Yes
Todd Thacker	Vigo County Council	No
Travis Norris	Vigo County Council	No
Mike Morris	Vigo County Commissioner	Yes
Chris Switzer	Vigo County Commissioner	No
Mark Clinkenbeard	Vigo County Commissioner	Yes
Sydney Holmberg	Vigo County Area Planning	Yes
Joni Wise	Vigo County Health Department	Yes
Karen Dyer	Convention and Visitors Bureau	Yes
Mike Peterson	Friends of Griffin Bike Park	Yes
Jessica Starr	Indiana State University	No
Mark Flynn	Ivy Tech	No
Tabby Flynn	Purdue Extensions	No
Kevin Shettle	Indiana DNR	Yes
Beth Tavlin	Wabash Valley Community Foundation	Yes
Aaron Warner	Disc Golf Donor	Yes
Karen Schneiders	Thrive	Yes
Chris Herrington	Emily's Walk	Yes
Heather Rayle	Vigo County Public Library	Yes
Bryan Horsman	riverSCAPE	Yes
Kilie Smith	Terre Haute City Parks	Yes
Bobby Moore	Boys and Girls Club	Yes
Jared Bayler	Vigo County Area Planning	No
Amber Kerr	Fowler Park Pioneer Village Folk	No

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Master Planning Meeting #1:**

Date: Thursday May 9, 2024  
 Location: Vigo County Council Chambers  
 155 Oak Street  
 Terre Haute, IN 47807  
 Time: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Agenda:**

1. Introductions
2. Master Planning Process
3. The past 5 years and success
4. Public input

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan**

- a. Survey questions-preliminary results
  - b. Input session-on survey and where we are now
- The next public meeting will be held at the Vigo County Annex, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 – 7:00p.m.

Meeting Transcript:

Adam Grossman: Here we go. We won't take the phone of your time. Appreciate everybody coming. Everybody in this room contributes to the parks, works with the parks, helps the parks in some capacity or other. So, first and foremost, we really appreciate everybody in the room. You know, it may be financial, it may be advice, it may be volunteer labor, it may be sending us people, but we appreciate everybody in the room and what you do for the county park. Everybody knows me. I'm Adam, I'm superintendent here for the county parks. This is Megan, she's our administrative assistant, actually her new title is office manager. This is Brian, he's our assistant superintendent. And you all know Santa. And then you know Heather, she's our natural resource programmer. So we're here, we're starting our master plan. We're gonna write this in the house. We paid somebody last year to help us go through the process. We felt like we've got it down, we're gonna save the county some money and go through this process ourselves. So, um, like, we're off to a good start. Rich has got some I-T skills and Heather's good at organizing some stuff so if it wasn't for them jumping on board and saying they could do this, we wouldn't have done it.

So moving on to master plan process. Right now, we're in the survey phase. We've got a survey out online. So if you guys have not taken it, do we have an ipad that people can? And if you don't have the ability at your office or in your own time, let us know. We'll make sure that you guys need a survey. We're trying to collect all that online so that it's much easier to do it, figure out, date it at the end. But we've gotten several places our online survey. It's quick probably takes you like, 2 min. So make sure you fill that out and then send that out to other people. Right now, it looks like we're ticking to beat our last survey amount from last master plans. So that's good. What did you say? We had 300 responses last time, so I think we're gonna beat that this time. So right now we're in the survey.

You guys are the first meeting that we've had. You guys are stakeholders, people that have worked with us in the trenches, you know, doing stuff. You know, I run to Sydney's office and ask questions almost every day. And Joni helps us in so many different ways. Bobby sends us all kinds of kids to ride bikes. And so everybody in here, you guys are stakeholders. You wanted to get your

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

opinions, show you where we're at, and get some input, we've got another public meeting at the Long Barn at 06:00 at Fowler Park Monday, so if you know, anybody you want to send that way, that's our public meeting. We'll go through a lot of this stuff, we're gonna go through today and open it up to public comment and see what people like or don't like.

Then we go through a lot of the history. We go through the history of the parks, how they came to be, what, you know, what changed in that park, and update all of the history to the parks, um. And then we'll have another public meeting here, June 27, at 06:00 for our final public meeting. We'll try to hit South and North, both bring people in here again, and did the same thing. We'll have three different meetings in the public survey to gather input from people and see where we're at. So, in the last five years, talking about last master plan, more successes than anything. And really wanted to shout out our department, just for the fact that our last five-year master plan, we've lost at least a year and a half, really, we got a ton of things done that was on our list to do. But we lost time with Covid here. Then you couldn't get any supplies, you couldn't buy lumber, you know. Then the big storm that hit last year set us back months. I mean, literal months, just devastation county wide. And we had everybody cutting trees and trying to open our trails for months, and probably put us on the band scale for for three months last year. So really, out of the five years that we hadn't worked towards the plan and the goals, probably only had three and a half years to get five years of work done. Up here, you're not gonna be able to see it. I can't see it from here. But if you want to walk past it after we're done, this is probably the best thing that come out of the last master plan and what we want to kind of mirror this time was our goals for our action plan, our action plan, our goals through the different parks. And we've got a ton of things in there. I've got red check marks on the things we've done. I've got little swingle red marks on the things we're currently working on. We hit almost every box on our action plan in the last five years. I don't know of very many park systems or anybody else that comes up with a five-year plan that's that robust that can actually hit every check mark. So couldn't have done without, you know, the team that we got and buying in from the community as well. I think I was gonna have Rich and Heather talk about some of their changes and successes here in the last couple of years.

Rich Moore: In the last five years, we pretty much finished out the bike park out there with the help of the Shepherds of Griffin Bike Park, we raised \$500,000 to \$600,000. I know you guys put in a lot more than that. They've added 16 miles of trails to the park atleast, and a bathroom facility. That's just amazing, I haven't had a bathroom out there for seven years. I've been there, and now I've got 3, really nice ones. Man, it's cool, but they're also continuing to

## Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year 2025-2029 Master Plan

fund raise to keep someone hired full time out there for me as a maintenance assistant. I mean, it's just crazy, huge to have someone out there, like today or tomorrow. They'll be, they'll be out there on a four wheeler, driving around with a chainsaw, clearing trails for me, I don't even have to have a check.

Also, our friends group, I got two friends groups. I'm super blessed. Mike Peterson is the president of our Friends of Griffin Bike Park. They help me with all the events I put on. We're putting on right at 25 to 30 events a year out there. And Adam talked about the storm we had. They were on the ground helping me cut giant trees out constantly during that storm, we were shut down for nearly a month, and with just volunteer help, opened it back up. Some of the events I talked about that we have, we do a big gravel race early in the spring. That one is in all hands on deck, I got people everywhere. Heather even helped us this year, she followed them around in a truck and got a new appreciation for what road cyclists do, and put up with 60 miles of gravel all the way out to Green County and back. And it was 30 mile an hour winds. It it was, it was no joke. Pump track, starting up. That's for the littlest of kids on our on our pump track with, it's like a little BMX track. But you should see the friends of Griffin Bike Park and parents out there pushing the kids up the hills when they can't make it. It's, it's truly our our event for the smallest the kids. Short tracks starts Thompson Thrift still are helping us with that. UM it's just a 1 mi track in duration for 30 min. And then our, then our Dual Slalom and speaking a Dual Slalom, that's what the shepherds are working on right now. Refreshing our Dual Slalom course at the top of it, I poached and rode the other day, it's amazing. If you haven't seen it, if you ride, you got come out and see it. It's really cool. That's kind of what we're working on, working on that part. We're trying to get the trails in good shape and get them cleaned up.

Now, with the help of the commissioners and the, and the council, and Joni, where are you, the health department, we're getting a new community center out there. They've raised got us enough money that we're gonna build a community center and pave the pump track. We met with the architect this morning. We still don't know exactly what we want. We all need to have a meeting I have crazy ideas. He has more conventional ideas, I think you all need to talk me down a little bit with this building. We're gonna do some really cool programming. Um, we're gonna work with the health department to get some, some health related stuff going heart, healthy stuff. You know, I had a heart attack two years ago. Kids programs, Bobby and his group have been out for, for my Trip for Kids program. Rives Halls been out, it's hard to get them out there. It's hard to get them to the bike park. So with the help of the health department and some extra money we got, and Thrive is gonna help us with getting buses to

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bring kids out. We're setting up these programs that'll start next year. We're super excited about that programming and super excited about the building. It's just everything's moving forward. It's moving forward fast. And I keep ugly notes to keep track of things. And thanks to you guys, I still have the greatest job there's ever been so appreciate it. Your turn, go after that.

Heather Cosme Milian: Thank you, hard to go after that. I only actually just started this position back at the end of July last year, I was working remotely while we still lived in Florida. And then we moved up here, back to Terre Haute in September, so I really haven't had a whole lot of time to kind of get started and get a whole lot going. But we've already been able to add a lot of programs to our schedule this year, a lot more programs than what we had last year. I'm looking to add more partnerships. We've got, like our Vigo County Library is out in the Pioneer Village, so they're gonna be out there with us, they've taken over the schoolhouse. We're gonna be working with Riverscape, we're hoping to get the college kids kind of hit our college campuses, get the kids out to kind of do more activities in our parks, especially there like at Wabashiki in a Dewey Point, that one's really close to them.

They could easily get out there and do things like kayaking for free, because college kids don't really have money, so kind of hit that demographic and be able to get them out and enjoying our parks. And, we're really looking to add more really important partnerships, like with the National Wild Turkey Federation and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and we're hoping to work with the D-N-R more and a lot of other organizations. We really are wanting to add more programs for kids because it's really important to us that we get kids outdoors and learning about nature, learning about conservation, learning about our invasive species, our native species. How do we protect them? How do we, you know, take care of our parks and our planet. And we're hoping that if we get them out there while they're young, they kind of build that love and take that into them or take that with them into adulthood. Kind of like one thing I talked with Mike about a few weeks ago. I grew up camping and hunting and fishing and hiking, and literally grew up in the woods and my husband did not. He grew up inside playing video games, and he would have never gotten started into doing any of these activities if it weren't for me. So, you know, it's kind of, these are things that I've taken into adulthood, and we're gonna bring our kids up in as well. And, you know, it's, that's something that's really important, and it's really good for their health too. So we hope to kind of really instill that in them this, hey, this is really important for your health. It's your physical health, your mental health. And also, let's take care of our parks and take care of nature.



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Adam Grossman: Thank you. So we've done a lot of things that we've improved on the last master plan, you know, more programming efforts, more concise efforts, kids programming at the bike park and bike rentals and free bikes and different things of that nature. So those, those two have done a great job and trying to hit those boxes that we wanted to check the last five years. Brian can chime in on any of these he'd like. But just a quick highlight.

Last master plan, we're really focused on infrastructure, lot of parks 40-50 years old. Lot of dilapidated infrastructure. So last plan really become a lot more focused on, let's build things up so that we can build on it later. And we succeeded in that goal. We've paved or micro sealed on every roadway we've got in the parks. Electrical is almost completely new. Water lines are completely new. That doesn't sound like big things to most people, but when we've got a water leak every other week, and we gotta take time to dig them up, repair them, and they're so brittle that you can't even come back to anything that's good enough to tie to. That's a big problem in parks. And then our water bill was sky high. We never knew what our water bills gonna be. They'd write off one, but then they wouldn't write off the other, so we were thousands of dollars. Now we have a more static water bill that we know what's gonna come. We don't spend all this time out here fixing water lines and have electrical issues and things of that nature upgraded most, all of well, all of our camping pedestals and put in new 50 amp sites and direct water hookups and things of that nature, all this stuff was done since the last master plan hitting a lot of these infrastructure highlights.

Septic updates, siding. We had redone the covered bridge, the Irishman's bridge, the Fowler Park, literally jacked it up and redid the whole thing underneath, the dam. And some slip, slip lining parking and extended parking some places. And then some of the big changes in the last five years, we went to an online reservation system. We were cash only until what now, three or four years ago, about four years ago, we were cash only, and you had to come to the office and pay us cash to rent a shelter, or first, come first served camping, cash only, and take some checks. We went to reserve only and online and cards, and we've more than tripled the income coming into the parks and made it easier. You know, Mike can sit there and his underwear at home and reserve a campsite for next week because I had to, I had to pick on him, um. But he can, we can do that anytime. You don't have to, you know, we can do it for you. We still have people call in and wanna be guided through the process. But it's super easy. You know what sites you have, you've already paid for it. And so that's that's really helped us with our income to build, do other things in the parks as well. To triple that right off the top, or even more than triple, has been great for us. So those are just some highlights.

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And also, cabins, cabin roofs. Keith Ruble was awesome at building stuff. He didn't go through and maintain nothing before he left. He left us with 22 structures with rotten roofs and different things. And I don't blame Keith, he's a great guy, but we had to go through and repair all those roofs. That's thousands of dollars wooden shingles, hand split cedar shakes are not cheap. Um, the labor to go up there. We've gotten our village folk will come out on the weekend and help us rip off all these shingles and help rebuild cabins and put them on. We've got now the June Swango Fund Community Foundation. We've got \$12,000 - \$13,000 a year dedicated to the Pioneer Village. Well, a lot of that up front was helping us restore some of these cabins so they didn't rot and fall in. And now we're looking at signage and some other improvements that we're starting to catch up a little but, but a lot of those, those were some of the more high level improvements that were made you guys need to add to that were awesome.

So those are a lot of high level things, because a lot of these things, the top three things is maintain our existing parks. So we really focused on that in five years is maintaining and improving infrastructure. If anybody has any question about what park is ours, that's up there. We still get calls all the time to rent a shelter at Deming Park, and I know their number by heart and half for ten years. So, send them, send them their way. But we will all more than likely be given South 7th Street Park to West Terre Haute to the West Terre Haute Parks Department, they started their own parts board. So that's one park that's not gonna be in this plan. That should be finalized, hopefully Monday, Tuesday, next week.

So moving into more why you guys are here, other than listening to me talk, we're gonna go through some of the highlights, probably the top ten survey questions. Right now we've got several surveys turned in, it's been live for a little while. We wanted to go through some of those surveys, get some thoughts on it, they're on the right track, and then ask for your opinions of what do we need to add. Is the survey going the wrong direction? What you guys think?

So next one. Somehow, there we go. So how often do people use the parks? 33 % what is that 38 %. I'm standing, right next to the TV, say three or fewer times a week. 37 % say once or twice a month. So we're hovering at a couple times a month. I don't know how all often you all use the parks, but do you, do you see your neighbors, your friends, fellow people? Do you see them using the parks often enough? Do you think they need to use the parks more? What? What do you think about that?

Bryan Horseman: Well, like, that's very consistent for a county part, because it's not like you can walk across the street for most people. So myself, I



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have to actually make a trip out somewhere. So if you're doing that every single day, no, that's a big step for a lot of families and people, I would say. So I think that seems just what I would feel on the county park and see.

Adam Grossman: But it's, it's very seasonal. And then not, you probably got 50 or 60 people that religiously every day, and then you got some that when they can or when they have time. Any other thoughts on that one? All right, we'll move to the next one. Trails are still the number one used amenity, anyone given time in the parks. So I'm gonna look at the Griffin Bike Park. Hiking, biking, of course, driven by park, is a lot of trails, so that's not that's to be expected. Fowler Park, again, 23.5 % so far. Park trails, which is surprising. And Fowler, they're probably going to Griffin. If I had to guess, we have connector trail now between Fowler Park and Griffin Bike Park, I'm gonna guess people are walking. Of course, we do have walkers that walk a loop around Fowler Park. What we've talked about doing for a while, our engineer has some historic bridges that need to go somewhere. We're getting one at Prairie Creek Park. But what I'd like to do eventually, any of these that need relocated, put them around Fowler when we got across water, and make a historic walking loop around Fowler Park would be awesome. So probably the next best use, like at Fowler Park is the Pioneer Village. Everybody knows Pioneer Days usually around this area. If you think of Fowler Park, you think of the Pioneer Village. So anybody disagree with that data for Fowler?

We've got Ruble Park, you know, wildlife viewing, but 46 % are hiking trails. That's pretty much wildlife viewing, hiking trails. That's kind of like what I expect from that park, um, it does get a lot of use. We had last weekend I drove by on Saturday and there's 8 - 10 cars in one lot, and five or six in another, and five or six in another, and then we only had 30 different cars out there walking the trails. So people are starting to realize it's out there. A lot of people it takes them a few years to even realize that a park is there, what it's about, and decide that they're gonna go use it. So you can tell them one time, and it usually takes them a while to think they're actually gonna go out and use it.

So Hawthorn Park, 27 % say, trails, which we have a large running group that's out there, the trained in Terre Haute Road Runners, a lot of different running groups. That's, that's one high level niche in Hawthorn Park is trails. If the gates aren't open at daylight, they get irritated. No comment. That's we have automatic gate. Now, that's the other thing we said, you know, we have automatic gates at every park, so they should open all by themselves, and we don't have to worry about unlocking it if the caretaker got out of bed on a Saturday morning to unlock the gate.

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Mike Morris: They do a great job out there. They all are very, very appreciative, of course. It leads to the Heritage Trail, things there, and bicyclists meet there. Tuesday, Thursday nights, sometimes on Saturday morning. The ride, it's, it's a hub for that kind of thing.

Heather Cosme Milian: We just had a big bicycle ride go from Hawthorn to Turkey Run and all the way back down to Hawthorn a couple weeks ago. They definitely love to meet up at Hawthorn for that.

Mike Morris: It's, you know, you talk about distance, travel, distance, things like that, I don't know if it works it's worked very well.

Adam Grossman: You know we're looking at installing some more water stations I think of that nature.

Mike Morris: I bike out of, Terre Haute, out of the trail, of course, to Hawthorn to be. It's nice linkage. I think that's the key.

Mike Peterson: I mean, it's you're, you're tying into, you've tied Hawthorn into, the Heritage Trail. That connectivity, more connectivity we can provide from a park to something that is attractive. In my mind, is, is a, is a win for the county of win for the public. Because it's, it's, it's, you know, hiking. You get, if you go out there and here and trail, there's people on it every day of the week and all hours, and it it, you know, we look at expanding that with Riley Spur. You know, they try to bring a lot together. I think it's just gonna continue to increase. I think you see it around the country, you've got Nickel Plate Trails north, you know, they've got things that branch off a bit. And, you know, the, the areas around it continue to thrive.

Mike Morris: A tremendous amount of strollers out there, many out of Heritage Trail Apartments and families out there dogs walking, constantly, lots.

Adam Grossman: It's rode all the time.

Heather Cosme Milian: That is one of the big comments we've gotten, with the survey, is they really like the connectivity. They want more connectivity. They want more trails that can connect all of our county parks to each other. County parks to city parks, county parks to just straight down to downtown Terre Haute, where they can start at Griffin or wherever, ride up into Terre Haute, enjoy lunch, hang out downtown, and then ride back home. Just more trails that will go everywhere. And at the end of the presentation, I pulled a couple comments, and one of them on there is they would really, really like to see, you know, even trails extending out to all of the colleges. Let's connect all the colleges together.

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We are on, I know Kevin and Bryan are on the committee with me, and we're on, on a trails committee. So we kind of, we do meet and we talk about those things, and we kind of are starting to look at what can we do as both a city and a county to reach that? Because people do. They love trails, and they love, you know, it's great to have a trail that you can go and then turn around and come back. But it's even better if you have a trail that goes somewhere. So that's, that is one thing that we, we have seen, and we definitely would like to look into, and we're looking into it with the Trails committee, which has, I mean, riverSCAPE and D-N-R and the city's on that committee too. It's a whole group of us so.

Adam Grossman: Yeah, we're working right now like Bicentennial, Emily's Walk, riverSCAPE a lot of work going on over there. We don't have a true connection yet from Wabashiki trail to the pedestrian walkway. The pedestrian walkway is used every day by 20 people an hour or more. So we're, we're gonna, we have that connection, hopefully by the end of this summer, and we'll have A-A delineated path that connects that so we're we're working towards some connectivity in different places so.

Mike Peterson: You know the thing, I think it does is you know, you physically, obviously you're trying to connect parks together. When you're talking about what you're really doing is you take connecting different communities together, right? You've got ability for this subdivision or this side of town, there's a half a million people go to a destination, you know, you can get the Heritage Trail come around, tie into Dobbs and Demming, you know, they've got an awesome system where there's always people going up and down. Poplar between the two parks. You know, if you say, I had that time, you know, Rose has got, they're looking at expansion. They've got a walking trail, they're wanting to, I get across 46 and 40, you know.

Rich Moore: Just don't be riding down the steps of Rose. I get excited.

Adam Grossman: I should mention, they have been recording the meeting, so we can take notes later. So if anybody doesn't want their voice recorded, don't just whisper. So, so looking at Dewey Point and Bicentennial Park, you know? Well, obviously the trail, the Wabashiki trails, highlights that, but, um, kind of surprising a little bit, because I don't think even people know it's back there as much as a butterfly garden picks up there, pretty hot that people are, are liking that. What we call the R-T-P trail and we need to come up with a better name for it, it is a recreational trust program money and then the health department helped us finish that trail it loops around to the wetland area around

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the butterfly garden down there. So people are noticing that they're walking it. They're liking it, so good to see that. Talk about most of that stuff, more or less.

So how would you rate the upkeep, the maintenance of the existing parks? I'm glad to see that. 53.5 % say it's good. 40 % say excellent. So tells me even that all of our work and infrastructure in the last five years is paying off. 7.1 % say, fair. So far, I don't see the yellow sliver in here, so we're not poor yet of any kind. So we pride that we picked up another maintenance, part time, year round maintenance person, just for trails, that has a dedicated vehicle and a trailer and they go out and they start cutting limbs back and spraying and mowing and different things to keep up. We're constantly still expanding what we're taking care of. So right now, we've alleviated that need with a part, time position, a lot easier to get a part, time through counsel than full time. So we started there for now and see if we work our way up. Any, any questions on how do you all think the parks are maintained when you visit? Well, if you give me a poorer review, I'm not gonna document it.

Bryan Horseman: We're very good.

Adam Grossman: All right, well, we'll move on to the next one. What are the primary reasons you use Vigo County parks? And we also have pens and paper. I'm not sure where they went. Where are they right there? So if you have additional thoughts comments before you leave, write them down. Or if you don't want your voice on tape recording, you can write down your comment. You know, maybe you guys use the parks differently. You know, Bobby sends his kids there, and he wants to make sure they get his life skills classes. And we want more of that. Joni wants more heart health programs. Community Foundation wants to grow our revenue stream for the parks. You know, any of these kind of thoughts that you have? We'd like to make sure this gets documented in this master plan, and really think at a high level, how are we gonna proceed in the next five years? What's our fundraising goals? What are our park goals? What our visitation goals, what are our health goals and, and we're gonna push hard in the next five years over youth programming and health benefits, healthy lifestyles. That's, that's gonna be a huge pusher over the next five years.

So, so far, survey says 22.2 % enjoy the outdoors, which is great. We're the county parks that that's what we're here for. The city parks have their niche that, you know, they still have Dobbs and but we're more of that outdoor space. We have the camping we have that immerse yourself in the outdoors for three or four days, um, hiking trails, biking, those kind of things. So it's good to see that that ticks up there, higher than some of the rest of this a lot of other and walking up there. We also, I have 11 % that like to bring their families out here for

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activities and to do things over the weekends. So, but more people are broke up over why they're coming, which is good, because we offer enough amenities for those families to go come out and do those things. The pie chart shows people are doing a lot of things in the parks in a lot of different ways, a lot of different amenities, which is great. You don't wanna really see the pie chart that's just got two or three things, then I guess that's easy to cater or two, but they're not doing near what you want. Rental facilities, hanging out with friends, camping, fishing. There's a small sliver, maybe that doesn't use the parks. There's one person that doesn't use the parks. So, I wish we could reach out to them and tell them what we have.

Joni Wise: Have you ever asked on the questionnaire if you don't use the parks? Why not?

Heather Cosme Milian: That is one of the questions.

Joni Wise: What's the barrier?

Heather Cosme Milian: The biggest one is they don't have time. The second biggest one is they don't know what's offered, which is kind of one of the things we're really working on, or I'm really working on, is kind of highlighting what even do we have in our parks, what's around. We just had an Earth Day kayaking event recently, and when I was telling my sister that, hey, I've got this kayaking event. Can you babysit my son? She was like, why do you wait, what you have a kayaking event? And I was like, yeah up at Dewey Point we've got the kayaks. And she was like, where are you gonna put the kayaks in at just off the bank? And I was like, no, we have a kayak launch. And she didn't even know. She's lived here for four years and her husband has lived here his entire life, and they didn't even know we have kayak launches, and she loves kayaking. So that's we the DNR just recently did, a couple weeks ago, a whole thing on water safety and kind of highlighted some kayaking and stuff. So I piggybacked off that and did a whole post on Did you know that we've got three different kayak launches in our parks? I'm gonna do them periodically throughout the summer, and we are kind of planning to do that, especially for July, is Park National Parks and Recreation Month. So during the month of July, this month, we're featuring Griffin by Parks, because it's National Bike Month. But in July, we're gonna go through and feature all the parks and really highlight what each of the parks offer, and try to get that word out there. And hey, this is what we have and we also have started, since the last master plan, we'll talk about these later. We started making these magazines, we really would like to get these distributed more. We'd love to see them in the hospital, at Union Hospital, or various places. We gave these out at ISU, any different event that we go to, we just, we were at Markle

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Mill Park for an event this past weekend, and we were handing these out. And for each of our parks that are listed in here, it lists in there the amenities we have, along with our park maps and some other things and features that are in there for each every single one of our parks. So I think that's just people don't quite know what we have. So we're trying to scream it from the rooftop if, if you so will of, hey, come see us. We've got all these great things.

One of our board members, Tabby and I were talking recently and she said, you know, we're really kind of spoiled here in Vigo County because we have one of the highest parks per capita in the nation and so we really need to highlight that and showcase that.

Rich Moore: At the bike Park, we're also working on a youtube series illustrating the features and the different trails we have at the park. And I wanna, once I figure out how to make all this work efficiently, I wanna work it in the rest of the parks as well. Editing videos is tough just putting that out there. It's not. And I've got, I've got a guy that helps me. He goes under the handle of chicken sendees. We've got a lot of videos on there with him. He and I are constantly laughing through them. So we've got to learn not to do that. But we're gonna work with Heather, we laugh all the time as well. We try to do our parks once we figure out how to do it with Griffin Bike Park a little bit better

Adam Grossman: Yep. That was a big thing. And the last planning effort was people didn't know. So our solution was we'll bring them a magazine, we'll start post on Facebook, more, have more of an online presence.

Brian Gilbert: So can I add something to that? But he was talking about the Campspot, our reservation system making our revenue higher. We also seen that through Campspot, people can make them, reservations are coming from a bigger, larger area. So before we had people like Fowler, you pull people from actually Sullivan County more than Vigo County. And then area around Fowler, where now we're seeing people from all over the United States, at this point, we still have the same people, but we're also seeing a larger group of people from a larger area.

Adam Grossman: Campspot has the ability. We ask them, why did you come? And a lot of it is for vacation. They come out of town for vacation. Griffin Bike Park was ticking pretty high in the percentages. So we have the ability to run those numbers at any one given time. Why are we're coming to the parks? So we have that data, yes.



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Karen Schneiders: Hi. I think the last plan, you were really, you heard that, you know, people need more channels of communication, more ways of learning what's going on. What do you see? It is going to be a big focus not necessarily biggest but what is a big focus that you would like to focus on for this next plan.

Adam Grossman: Well communication again trying to, get out what we have we gotta a lot of great amenities and we're doing so many great improvements. But I still don't think people realize what we have and trying to hit the people where they get their information there's a whole big percentage of them say they wanted on Facebook. They still completely do it on Facebook. Some of the younger kids are getting away from Facebook, so trying to figure out how to hit that generation of what 18, 16, 20 what are they on? They're on some of these Twitter things I don't know anything about, so try to get them, hit them. CVB's been great, and getting us in some additional magazines, some statewide, national wide stuff to get the people here. So, I guess, you know, a lot of input will continue on infrastructure, building truck connections, different things of that nature, a lot going on at Griffin and Youth Programming, but trying to get the word out that what we have.

Karen Dyer: So the CVB is going to migrate to a new web platform that is a platform in the state that the IDDC, Indiana Department Destination Corporation uses. And then we will have the ability to link our events to the statewide events which currently doesn't happen very frequently. We're gonna improve that, we're not going to be migrated to that until probably about November so probably in about 2025 we should have that ability to have statewide coverage with our events much more easily than we do now.

Adam Grossman: Any other comments on that, that portion?

Rich Moore: And it's a constantly moving target as to what people want. You know, we started with websites, went Facebook, and then it went to these reels. And it's, you just got to pay attention to what kids are doing, you gotta have a kid helping.

Karen Dyer: Well, this will be website and also be on the web, so it's on the Web.

Rich Moore: It's, it's all over the place. It's, it's fun.

Adam Grossman: We got on other exciting things to talk about, exciting things going on, not only this youth program, but in the last master plan, several people were asked about Disc Golf. We've got association come in the Oneville Trails. We've been talking about it for twelve years, trying to figure out how we're

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gonna get Disc Golf. Now we have it. Mr. Warner, has been an awesome supporter of it and his mom as well, of trying to that started in our parks. We're, we'll say, half now done with one of Prairie Creek. Then we're gonna move to Fowler Park, and we're looking that's gonna attract more people, but it's gonna give our youth, this free opportunity to go out and play this golf. So lot of opportunity with that, and trying to alleviate another check mark in the last master plan, yes, sir.

Aaron Warner: I was gonna say, for help on the youtube stuff at the high schools, there are classes that do that cut that can be fantastic, volunteer labor, awesome volunteer hours, even do stuff over the summer. They'll get a real kick out of it too.

Rich Moore: Okay, I'll email you.

Adam Grossman: You know, maybe we can get that for free labor.

Aaron Warner: So just sort of want talk to look into that.

Karen Dyer: I've got a meeting with the ISU sports management group next day next week, I think. I'll volunteer some spots for you guys also as well.

Adam Grossman: Kind of along that same line ISU's sports management if they've got any health, bone and joint people.

Karen Dyer: Do you want to come to my meeting?

Adam Grossman: Yeah

Karen Dyer: Okay.

Adam Grossman: That's so that is the reason for the meeting. We need that, especially at Griffin Bike Park. Mike knows better than anybody, things can happen. Which we like ortho people there. So if ISU has got something in their rec program that would fit that, that would be great if we can work that out.

Karen Schneider: One other thing I'd like to suggest is, you know my organization, we target seniors and trying to keep them active and in their own homes. There's a way that, you know, if there's some events going on that target, specifically seniors, if we have enough of a lead time, we can get that on our Facebook page as well. We just, we need more than a 24 hour notice.



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Heather Cosme Milian: We typically post things, I mean, I post absolutely everything on our website, on our Facebook, we post twice a day on our Facebook.

Karen Schneider: It's fantastic.

Heather Cosme Milian: My predecessor did not use Facebook very much at all. And since I came in we post twice a day, every day. I have it scheduled currently through the next two, two weeks, I think. But on our website, we post things, we don't want to overwhelm people, so we try to keep things in groups of three months. So we've got May, June and July up there, and they can just go through and you can see everything we've got going on for the next several months, both in our parks and then also, we've got, like, our Memorial Day ride coming up, all of our bike park events. Everything is gonna be on our website here. We really try to keep it up to date as much as possible, along with our Facebook, because I know some people do still use that. We do still advertise to in like the newspaper, um, radio and television as well just so that way we're not only honing in on one kind of media, we are still kind of focusing on everybody.

Adam Grossman: These guys done a great job with website, keeping up with it, and that's a lot of parks and a lot of different information, and try to keep it where it's easily obtainable, but yet you can follow along with it. Yes, yes.

Beth Tavlin: You know, I've got a, I'm looking on Facebook now, and I see a group that's the Vigo County Park and Recreation and it hasn't had any post on it since 2021. So I'm thinking that that may be an old group.

Heather Cosme Milian: Several before me, and Facebook won't let me, that was Laura, one of Laura's groups, I think. And Facebook won't let me delete it.

Beth Tavlin: I don't know if there's anything you can go on and post on it would say, you know, please don't use this page, go here, please go to another link because I know I'm just looking for your Facebook and I'm having trouble finding it.

Adam Grossman: Can we still post on it, or even as a comment?

Heather Cosme Milian: I can look.

Adam Grossman: At the very least, we'll post on it as a comment saying, if you're going here, you're in the wrong spot, go somewhere else.

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Bryan Horseman: Do you guys do email newsletters or anything about parks events?

Heather Cosme Milian: Rich and I are working on it.

Adam Grossman: There you go.

Rich Moore: We used to.

Adam Grossman: We're workin on it. That's what they said.

Rich Moore: And for the record, my idea of the senior and yours are a little different, I refuse.

Adam Grossman: Anything else on that subject. All right, I'm gonna try to get you out, at least by one. I lied a little bit, I'm not gonna get out at ten til. I'd like to see the Vigo County Parks add the following things, this is, again, where even if it's writing it on a piece of paper, shooting this an email, putting it in a survey, or if you want to audibly say it today, what you is your feedback is different organizations that work with different things. You see in your organizations right now, 33 % more walking trails, 23 % more programs and activities, I don't know if that's ticking with what you guys see, more accessible play equipment. We're getting ready. We've got one playground that's older that we're gonna redo here in the next five years, that it'd be a good spot to look at that. So do you agree, disagree? Or more things to add. You know, you wanna see the VCPRD add the following things to our county parks, because there's something that people aren't saying that things should be added.

Bryan Horseman: You may think about just nothing as a blank question, where people can fill in and just see what works.

Adam Grossman: We, I think we have one, right? We have one.

Brian Gilbert: I do hear a lot on that wifi. A lot of people do want wifi in the park, whether it's good or bad.

Adam Grossman: But I just use my phone all the time.

Brian Gilbert: Well, we hear it all the time, especially campers and stuff.

Mike Peterson: To a certain point, I think it may need to be tailored to a park a little bit. For example, at Ruble it works to have guided tours, it's a new park trails are pretty spread out, you know. So, I know, like Tabby did last year, what was she some, like, insect tour or flower tour or whatever, it was something

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like that. Maybe something like that works there. Maybe it works at Griffin, you know, you probably don't need that at Fowler. Probably there's something different at Fowler or Hawthorn.

Adam Grossman: We're gonna have more meetings coming up here with, like you and Clint and our Friends of Griffin Bike Park. We're gonna have that section in the master plan. So we need to sit down with you guys more specifically and say, are we working toward the same things in the next five years? What's the next five years look like? The village folk and Disc Golf, you know, more specific parks, because it's all broke out into different sections. So we're, we're gonna have more, more specific meetings to come.

Karen Dyer: One of the things about helping your local stakeholders feel like they know what's going on in the parks is maybe getting them in like with what you said with tours. So perhaps you could work a little bit with the colleges, or maybe you already do this, where you bring groups of freshmen down to specific parks so that they're experiencing Griffin Bike Park or something that they've never done before. During that whole had the first month of being here in Terre Haute. So, you know, one of the things that the state's goals, and I think local goals, is to keep the college kids here so that they feel like that they have, you know, something that they can do in their community. Another big group is the 181<sup>st</sup> my son is a member and every second weekend of the month they bring everybody who's a guardsmen from across the state here into town. Sometimes they bring their families, sometimes they don't but if they were to have something really fun like Griffin Bike Park for the 181<sup>st</sup> or whatever, they might bring their family and their kids and their bikes and enjoy something like that, they're always looking for ideas for something like that for the Guard group.

Adam Grossman: Yeah we can do something like that, we can do a discount for anyone who can show their ID for camping and have an event at Griffin for them, it would blend very well, we can definitely do that.

Karen Dyer: We're pretty unique to have four colleges and a guard base in our community. We really do have a lot of opportunities.

Adam Grossman: Anything else we need to see in the County Parks? Any needs that aren't being met or anything else. All right, moving on. I think we've got written ones, or is there one more?

Heather Cosme Milian: There's another one.

Adam Grossman: Oh, so what recreational programs do you wish we offered more of or expand on? Most people are saying, movies, festivals and

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tournaments, Disc Golf. We're gonna have several tournaments when those courses get built, so we'll have that ability. Festivals, the park movies, people think they want them but the problems been is they just don't come and they're really expensive. We used to do what is up to five or six a year, and we'd spend what, 15 hundred bucks per movie per movie, and you'd have ten people. Everybody thinks it's a wonderful idea, but in reality, they're not showing up for them. So that was one we tried to hit that one last time I don't know what, what exactly people want in that, that line.

Joni Wise: There's a lot of the promotions that you talked about you know, the events and disc golf, maybe the explosion of food trucks having that as an extra draw for people to come out and spend the day and be at the event.

Adam Grossman: Oh yeah, we are working that hard now, actually we've got what, three or four on a contract now. We've got a coffee truck showing up to the campground. We've got contracts up with them, 10 % goes back to the park. And we should have them starting in this summer.

Joni Wise: Another thing would be groups that go out and use the parks would want to make their own videos and upload them to a youtube site, whether it's the exercise, you know, equipment that's out at at Hawthorn, you know, just whatever, however your group utilizes it. And then that way, people like to see themselves and see their friends and know that they're part of the bigger process.

Adam Grossman: Yeah, we've got a youtube channel we can upload to.

Joni Wise: How much is your, how much do you, how many people use the lake to swim?

Adam Grossman: So that's kind of a, it's an interesting subject. A ton of people think they love to swim at the beach of Fowler. Reality is, most people don't want to swim in the lake anymore. We get, we tried to do a survey last year, and our beach attendants kind of dropped the ball, and we didn't get that. But, you kind of see the same 15-20 people usually over and over again. So we are, are looking into what that looks like. You know, I hated the idea of slash pads the only one I'd ever consider is at Hawthorn Park, it's closer to town and we did away at the beach for three years all as we got was when you're gonna reopen the beach of Hawthorn, like, you know, probably never, it's just not gonna happen. So, we still have the one at Fowler Park it can be busy here there, but, I mean, usually it's the same 15-20 people. It's a, it's a large investment. So we're,

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we're definitely gonna analyze that here, the next, this summer. Offering water trails and things of that nature.

Kilie Smith: I'd say just because a lot of your feedback was that I don't have time for the park, maybe expanding on the amazing program you all are doing, the bringing corporate retreats, corporate jobs, you know find a way to bring them to the park while they're at work because you know they gotta be there so you don't have to make time for it. Expanding on some of the wonderful youth programming you have to look at maybe childcare potential opportunities there to expand on it. And you guys are just doing amazing work. It's really incredible to see you.

Adam Grossman: No, I think we got a lot of new businesses coming in town with a lot of new folks there could use a retreat.

Mike Peterson: To expand the water use, you know, if, if there isn't a way to, you know, people like kayak, you know, if there's a way to create a way, I know there's a lot of overhead there initially but if you had at Dewey Point of Fowler or Hawthorn, you know a way that people on weekends could come in and rent kayaks or canoes or whatever you have. If there's a way to utilize that resource or find that ability, get Thrive or somebody to bus people to those locations on certain days of the week or certain weekends or on weekends. You know, again, there's many aspects of term promotion and getting the word out, but, you know, I think that alleviates the burden of doing it right? There's already a canoe there you don't have to worry about that part of what I can just show up. Life preservers are there, you know, if somebody tells me how to paddle hopefully I don't drown.

Adam Grossman: We dipped our toes in the water at Fowler, we did kayak rentals there and boat rentals between noon and 6 right now because that's when we could staff it. But we were also looking into the little kiosk things where you swipe your card and you get a canoe out and all that, and that's

Chris Herrington: Those aren't cheap are they.

Adam Grossman: No, they're not cheap, they're very expensive. But that was our solution for Hawthorn was to have the little chaos thing. Still have investigation after we dip our toes in the water.

Mike Peterson: A lot of issues there still to come.

Adam Grossman: Is that your hand? Don't wanna skip anyone, anybody else. All right, quickly, go to the last one or two here, this is the last one. So a lot

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of common highlights continue improve in existing facilities, additional trails and benches, how we build out Bicentennial Park in the next five years. There's a ton of opportunity there, hopefully we're gonna have a Little League Football come into West Terre Haute. They're gonna start that maybe we'll see how that works we're dealing with some permitting issues, but there's, there's also a lot of opportunity in that park that we kind of have a clean slate right now in that in frontage area, so lots come with it. A pool, pickle ball court, which we're revamping, one at Prairie Creek, to be pickle ball and tennis. We don't have a lot of courts around, you know, we don't have a lot of that. We got a lot of trees and a lot of hills but not a lot of flat space. But better playgrounds, maybe a paved pump track at Griffin which we're getting here shortly. We're paving the pump track at Griffin and that'll make that more of a year around destination for people doing something good all the time. Love to see all the things in parks, maintain safe playground equipment. More walking trails, just to make sure we keep up with Griffin Bike Park and more things for kids to do in West Terre Haute. So, is there anything to add for that? Like I said, you can write it on paper, shoot me an email, put it in your survey. Anything you want to add before we turn you loose to work or wherever else you're going today.

Joni Wise: Did anything surprise you?

Adam Grossman: Um, not really. It kind of surprises me that splash pad wasn't like hundred thousand comments on the very top. Everybody thinks they want a splash pad and last time, it still ticked towards the top. But it's not coming through as much as I thought it would. So, which is good, because I've got maybe one Hawthorn, if we ever did one. But that's really not our niche, that's not what we want there.

Rich Moore: We had a few people ask for concerts. We did concerts last year, no one came right it. It's just strange.

Mike Peterson: I showed up

Rich Moore: You show up to everything. It's just strange what they ask for, but they don't come to.

Mike Peterson: Has there been any, is there any feedback in terms of, you know, I see pickle ball with any basketball courts, baseball fields, softball fields, the works, or anything people are asking for. Do you think people are asking for?

Adam Grossman: Not really outside the tournaments and pickle ball.

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Heather Cosme Milian: The only thing they've asked for is pickle ball, but I know most of the parks have basketball.

Adam Grossman: Not very good ones.

Mike Peterson: That's what I was going to say, that's a loose, that's a very loose description of that

Heather Cosme Milian: They have them, but, no, that's that one kind of.

Mike Peterson: You know, I think again I don't know what the climate is but you know there's a, just use a basketball goal for example just in decent shape and you can organize, you know, a basketball league for example you know, the summer. And do you get interest? I don't know the answer to that.

Adam Grossman: It's hard to get people play outside and so it's hard to go and play outside. They'll come with their kids and shoot around for a little while but organize stuff like Clay County, and Vigo County, YMCA run league, basketball league, and I think they're starting to get that up but even indoor, it's tough to get people actually commit and signed up and had a lot of forfeits, so people weren't coming and like, I wanna provide that space for them to do it. I guess my take away is we can try but I don't know how many people sign up.

Mike Peterson: I don't know either I mean it just there used to be a kick pole league around here.

Rich Moore: It seems like seems like it's pockets it seems like it's pockets. Like, if you go to Brittle Bank Park, there's always someone playing basketball, pickle ball and soccer there. Always you go to one of our parks on outside of the city, and it's nobody, no one's using our basketball goals. I saw two people finally using our soccer at Hawthorn, we got brand new, huge regulation goals at Hawthorn now hardly anyone's used them. But you go in town, in the city where they can walk to it, I think it's get people to it.

Adam Grossman: Anything else. You gotta go back to work if you don't ask me more questions. Well, we appreciate your time. Like I said, make sure you fill out the survey, any of that opinion that you wanna make sure you interject into this master planning process. Feel free to come to the public meetings, send people to them, and we'll, we'll have a rough draft here by first of November, and I will make sure we send it out to everybody make sure that everything's in there. Then in the comments, you won't make sure in it. So thank you very much. You guys for just showing up. Thank you.



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Heather Cosme Milian: We also have magazine so come grab the magazine.

[Sign-in sheet for May 13, 2024, public meeting, agenda and meeting](#)



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NAME	BEST CONTACT	Affiliation/interest
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**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Master Planning Public Meeting #1:**

Date: Monday May 13, 2024  
 Location: Fowler Park Log Barn  
 3000 East Oregon Church Road  
 Terre Haute, IN 47802  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.

**Agenda:**

1. Introductions
2. Master Planning Process
3. The past 5 years and success
4. Public input

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- a. Survey questions, how are we doing
  - b. Input
- The next public meeting will be held at the Vigo County Annex, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 – 7:00p.m

Meeting transcript:

Adam Grossman: I'll go ahead and get this started, I'm Adam Grossman the Superintendent in the parks.

Brian Gilbert: Brian, Assistant Superintendent in the parks.

Rich Moore: I'm Rich, I manage the Griffin Bike Park.

Heather Cosme Milian: I'm Heather Cosme Milian, and I'm the natural resource programmer for the parks.

Adam Grossman: I'll take you through the process and the master planning process for us. In May the survey started, launched the survey. It is available here on iPads for you to take or online. May we had a stakeholders meeting, that was a really successful meeting. I think we had 30 people, stakeholders. Riverscape, Commissioners, Council, Thrive. You know, anybody we could think of that would wanna come give input and that was a really productive meeting. We spent an hour talking about parks and going through some of this stuff within partnerships, directions, and we've already capitalized on some of the conversations we had. So that was really, really good productive, good meeting.

This is the first of two public meetings. By October, we go back, we analyze the data from the survey, see what people have been saying, what they want, what the trends are, and submit it to the state by October for review. They kick it back then our board adopts the master plan through DNR. So that's a real quick run down of the process. Real quick, the last five years we'll talk about successes from the last plan. Now, why are we doing this plan well our board is eligible for other monies, if we have an adopted and approved master plans in the state, is probably the number one reason, other than community input, community survey and get a feel for what people are want in our community. We like them to give their input as well on the process. After we collect all this data, we go back, we analyze the data. We go through update on parts history and get a graph link together by, send off to the state, and then there'll be a final comment period before it gets adopted by board. So the last five-year plan that we did, we had a lot of plusses. And really we had three and a half years, instead of five between COVID, not being able to get materials, all kinds of stuff were shut down and then last year, we had the winds that came through and decimated the parks. So

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we lost a year and a half of our five and on your way out as well, if you're so inclined, our action planning from last plan to 2020 to 2024 plan, a ton of things, if there's a swivel mark at the time that I did, if we were working on it. If it's a checked market's done, and we've addressed almost every single thing on that action plan in the last five years. Super proud that that wasn't for the people that were making it happen, make it happen, it wouldn't happen. Going through some quick highlights with Heather and Rich, and you wanna talk about your changes in highlights.

Rich Moore: So, like I said, I'm the bike park manager. So I deal with maintenance and stuff at the bike park, then I do IT stuff for, for the rest of the parks. These last three years, we've had the Next Level Trails grant that I've got two friends groups over there. I've got the Friends of Griffin Bike Park, and the Shepards of Griffin Bike Park. One helps me do events and keeps the park up, and the other one builds the park out and helps us pay for all the stuff at the park. They got a \$500,000 grant, and we've pretty much finished out the park over there. We added 16 mi of trails so we're up to 32 mi of trails over there. I got a wonderful bathroom facility with three stalls, it's just a great, great facility. The friends are constantly helping us out on doing our events. I got guys over there now cutting a couple of trees now, as a matter of fact.

The county has stepped up just recently, and they got us some ARPA money and some EDIT money and Health Department money. We're gonna build a community center, kind of like this, a little more modern to where we can run kids programs out of it and health programs out of it. We're gonna have a pro shop in it, and my office will be in it. I'm currently, my office is currently in an old construction trailer, and the floors are falling through. Heather knows firsthand, she went through the floor, right by the window in my office. So we can do programs out of this building like Trips for Kids, where we bring kids from in town out here to ride. We've probably got about, I got 40 bikes over there, in really run down places to store them. So and we're looking forward to the to the extra programming we can do out of that. And really excited.

Heather Cosme Milian: Hi, I'm Heather, the Natural Resource Programmer. So I handle all of the programs and events with all of the parks, not just the parks here, but also the ones all the way up on the North End and even over in West Terre Haute as well. I just started this position last summer. I started remotely in July, and then moved up here in September, and have been working since then. So I jumped in right for Pioneer Days. We've been looking at, well, I've been looking at this year, making sure we focus on building on our nature and our educational programs, so making sure that we're having things available for kids to be able to get them outside, get them in nature learning how to hike, how to

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identify plants in animals. We really are expanding on our field trips that were offering in the parks, I just had one up at Hawthorn this morning. Last week I had one right here in the Pioneer Village. Previously, we've only really done Mini Pioneer Days for all of the fourth-grade kids here in Vigo County as part of Indiana history. They come out and they learn about Pioneer life right here in our own village and I think that's a really important asset that we have for the parks and something that we need to share with all the kids. And just make sure we get all the kids out of nature. And, you know, if we build on that now, that's something that they're going to take with them into the future.

So we're looking at expanding on some really good relationships with different organizations and stuff in Terre Haute, like we are working with the County Library, they actually are out here in our village. They're one of our cabinkeepers, but then we're gonna be working with them on some programs this summer, as well as part of their summer reading program. We're looking to expand on things within the summer and then we're also looking at different organizations so that we can do lots of fun, educational things with kids out here in our parks to get them outside and help teach them about health and all of that fun stuff.

Adam Grossman: So, and the other part of our improvements for the Master Plan Action Plan, last time number one when we went through public survey, was to improve the existing parks. Had a lot of infrastructure, water lines that couldn't be fixed, electrical problems, so a lot of things that aren't seen above ground, that we put in underground. We have all new electric panels in all the camp grounds, fresh water hookups, new waterlines in the parks, a lot of L-E-D lights solar lights things of that, nature. Checked up on the Covered bridge and we redid it all the way so that was a big project so we had a lot of different things, we micro seal paved Now when we do Hawthorn this year, we'll micro paved all of our roads in the parks. So we also got an online check-in system, which tripled our revenue almost overnight. People before were first come first served, they didn't know what site they could get, they didn't know who was there. Now they can reserve it in advance, now they got the site that they want for the day that they want, and it's way easier for them to do. So that's been pretty good. Had a couple growing pains with the reservation system, but we keep working out bugs as we go.

So a whole lot of infrastructure stuff, the cabins here in the village, the Village Folk helped us rip cabin roofs off and replace. And one good thing we got Swango Fund, June Swango, finally got \$12,000, \$13,000 year, dedicated very specifically for the for the pioneer village. So we've been doing nothing last two or few years but roofing, we had a lot of dilapidated roofs leaking and rotten roofs. We still have one or two more to go, at least, and looking at signage and some other improvements, then after that. So a lot of big projects that some of them

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didn't necessarily show were real shiny things, but necessary things. So hopefully, this five-year plan, we're ready to jump off on some, some more things that aren't as shiny. The parks up there for I forget, South 7th Street is not on there. I've not heard about their meeting yet, it may even be tonight, I don't remember. But South 7th Street more than likely will belong to the West Terre Haute Park System hopefully maybe next week or so. So I wish, we wish them the best of luck on their endeavors.

Moving on to some survey results, I'll get go through some of our survey results, those kind of, last five years, a really quick high level gloss over some of the accomplishments of the last master plan, that, some of the input and things. Now we'll look forward to the next five years and what we are seeing from the survey questions. I want to know from you all if you would agree or disagree with some of these questions, and then there'll be an opportunity to put some personal spin on things, what you would like to see or not see or detract from the parks. I'm gonna walk over there and see that I can see the TV.

All right, next one. How often do you use the county parks? Most people were averaging one, what did we say, one or two days a week. You know, there are several, a big, big part of this is couple of times a month once or twice a week. We see our religious, everyday walkers that that are here in the rain or shine but at least we know people, most generally, if they're taking the survey, at least they're using the parks.

Rich Moore: And these are, these are results from the survey that is here that you guys can take.

Adam Grossman: This is a live survey.

Rich Moore: We're, we're updating as we do our meetings.

Adam Grossman: Heather was nice enough to go back to the office today and update the graphs for us. So we were over 200 people now, I think is what she said.

Rich Moore: She did, she did.

Adam Grossman: So we're hoping, like last master plan of 300 surveys completed we're hoping to have much more than that, We're already at 200 and something.

Heather Cosme Milian: We're at 220s.

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Adam Grossman: So we're tracking well.

Community Member 1: Do you guys have paper copies?

Adam Grossman: No, we're doing it all electronic but we have iPads for you today.

Community Member 1: Bring them Saturday.

Adam Grossman: We can do that.

Heather Cosme Milian: I can do that.

Community Member 1: Because you'll probably get a few more people that you wouldn't otherwise get.

Adam Grossman: The data, trying to clean that from paper copies, both trying to understand what people's writing were and trying to qualify that data was very difficult.

Community Member 2: So I just, I'm looking at the numbers, and that's not very many people, and I know there, I don't know the last time they did a census in Vigo County, are these numbers to the right, the total 7, 17, 70. Oh, is that people? That have taken the survey?

Heather Cosme Milian: We have 220 something, it's 226 people have taken the survey so far.

Community Member 2: Is it just Vigo County?

Rich Moore: No

Heather Cosme Milian: No, no, anyone can take it.

Community Member 2: How long have you been doing it?

Heather Cosme Milian: We posted it May 1. It's both on our website and on our Facebook page. And then the news has been also, we sent out a press release to all the news outlets in the area. We've not heard back from the newspaper, but Channel Ten and Channel Two have both been running our survey in the news cycle as well. I heard it got ran a bunch this weekend

Community Member 2: Did they run in the newspaper?

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Heather Cosme Milian: We send it to the newspaper and we've not heard back from them yet, so hopefully I'm gonna keep sending it to them until hopefully they get it published in there. Actually, as part of this, we do have to include census data. The last census that they did was in 2022, and in Vigo County as a whole, there was 100,006 people in Vigo County.

Community Member 2: Oh, I see that many people. That's, I think, the before that it was I think, it was seventy thousand, so that was quite an increase in me.

Community Member 1: I think it's, it's actually down. That was probably just town, this was the city and town.

Heather Cosme Milian: This was the county as a whole and we actually have a decrease from our 2020 survey that they did. So actually, I think they're due for census this year. I think they do them every two years.

Community Member 2: So in Vigo County in 2022, there were a hundred and thousand people. Okay, I did not know that. That's very interesting. Thank you.

Heather Cosme Milian: And that will, at the end of this process, he probably was going to tell you, this will be posted for comment, public comment and things like that. The whole master plan, once we have it written and that will be a whole section in the master plan, is all of our demographic information for the county. If that's something you would be interested in looking at.

Community Member 3: A lot of people like me, I don't ever go to the park, so they don't have what I like to do.

Adam Grossman: We're getting to that. I figured that's why you were here.

Community Member 3: There's no, there's nothing at any state parks in Vigo County that has a part of my interest. I mean, I know there is for the kids and stuff like that, because there's a lot of people ride horses that don't go to the park because there ain't no nothing there.

Adam Grossman: We're gonna get to that section where we can write that down. Alright I'm ready for the next one, we'll go fairly quickly through these. Fowler Park, parks and trail, or park trails, 22 %, that's this portion here. 19 % pioneer village, of course, there's a lot of people who go to Pioneer Days, and Mini Pioneer Days and things like that. So it's probably not too assumptious to think it is pretty, pretty accurate.



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Ruble Park, of course, hiking trails is like 50 %. That's, that's mostly what's out there. Hiking trails. Then Griffin Bike Park, a lot of good splits in Griffin Bike Park. Anywhere from, visit the Memorial area to pump track. What is it? A larger numbers, it's almost a tie between

Heather Cosme Milian: Trail riding and just general hiking you know, on the trails.

Adam Grossman: So there's a lot of different activities there.

Rich Moore: To be fair, I hadn't shared that on GriffinBikePark.com until this week.

Adam Grossman: Well, still, there's a lot of different ones. Anybody disagree yet with what 220 people were saying? All right, let's move to the next one then. Hawthorn park is 30 % still, again, trails, that's 123 people. So they're using that park for trails, which that's a big, hot area for running clubs and things like that. So it doesn't necessarily shock me and it's the National Heritage Trail. 10 % is outdoor workout equipment, so it's good they're using the workout equipment, at least. How many people said that? I was curious, 22 people. So, camping doesn't rank up there as many times as what you think. 18 people use those campgrounds

Community Member 1: How many sites are out there? I guess in comparison to here.

Heather Cosme Milian: It's in the 50s

Community Member 1: Is that similar to here then.

Adam Grossman: Yup. Prairie Creek, 34 % park, again trails natural trail area there. The other chunk there, is boat ramp, which is surprising from Prairie Creek especially. Oh, playground. There, it's colors are all blending together. They, they do too many things, and you gotta use too many colors.

Community Member 1: And I don't know who's using that boat ramp.

Adam Grossman: That's, that's awful surprising. Let's move on to Bicentennial Park, then um, 30 % what's that? The other one, I can't tell a difference. Wabashiki Trail? The big things like exactly the same to me.

Community Member 4: Look at the number. What is the total number underneath? What is Wabashiki Trail?



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Heather Cosme Milian: Wabashiki trail is the big one that goes down through Wabashiki, underneath, 70 and around.

Adam Grossman: 13 % for Emily's Walk wildlife scope and interpretive kiosk.

Community Member 1: So what with that? I know there was a plan to finish that trail out and make it a loop, is that still the plan?

Adam Grossman: Yup, I'm hoping by the end of the summer may be a little assumptuous, but hopefully the new, you know, we get that done there.

Community Member 1: And last time I've gone down there there was a pond back there, I rode to the water's edge.

Heather Cosme Milian: You didn't bike through it, you weren't brave enough?

Community Member 1: Oh, no.

Community Member 2: All right. I said, okay, if we, as we're talking about these different aspects of the parks, if we, because I know you, you said something I mean a little bit ago, about how you wanted to, how you wanted to proceed with this. But I'm thinking of things as these things are being mentioned, could be improved upon. I could lose them, you know what I mean. Whenever it's time to discuss it, like you said, I wanted to have a discussion about them, that I might forget about some of the things that I think, you know, maybe should be mentioned. So do you want me to wait?

Adam Grossman: No, go ahead.

Community Member 2: I don't know. I'm not, I'm not, you know. I'm not the leader here. If you were just, don't wanna, I don't want you, you know, you know, I know. I also don't want you to be overwhelmed. I can see already, you've got way too much to deal with. I'm not very good.

Heather Cosme Milian: Oh no, you're good.

Rich Moore: I interrupt him on a daily basis.

Community Member 2: I there's a couple of things I already spoke I called your office and talked with that whoever was in the office at the time but the trail, the Wabashiki trail, between Terre Haute and West Terre Haute, I noticed when I took off the other morning it was a beautiful morning and I was by myself. But I noticed that there's a lot of trash in that now that wasn't there before. There was some trash there before I remember before they built the, the the walkway that

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now there's a lot more and I got to thinking about the wildlife like the frogs or whatever that are there naturally and I don't think it's good for their survival, a way for them to get a healthy ecosystem to survive, if people keep throwing trash over. Now I notice that we have a trash can at one end and a trash can at the other. And responsible people will, you know, they'll wait until they, you know, get all the way to the other side of the of the walk, right before they'll throw the trash away. But not everybody is responsible evidently. So my, my question is that there's a couple of benches there, like half way through if trash can could be put in there maybe that would encourage people to, you know, whatever their reason is for, maybe they lose it, you know, like they're, if they, you know, got a stroller or something and they drop something that's possible.

Community Member 1: Some of that is from the river too.

Brian Gilbert: The river floods and brings a lot of that up from the river.

Community Member 2: Well, there's, it's quite a bit of trash in the river. I wonder if there could be some kind of, you know, hiring somebody with the funds that you receive, hiring somebody to do clean up, occasionally, clean up like that, because it was a beautiful morning. And I looked at that trash and I was like, you know.

Adam Grossman: You know we do host cleanups, two or three times a year in that area. And the river had been low for a long time, and then it come up, and unfortunately, it washes anything that's in the river. It's caught up there underneath that rip wrap and stuff. We had a trash bin in the middle for a while, people weren't really using it, and, well, they'd be because they're throwing it off somewhere else, or whatever the case. But we, we had one in the middle for a little while, and it just didn't seem, didn't seem successful. But I think it's more half between the ignorance and half between the river is most of that trash.

Community Member 2: And I too wanted to know about the, the kayak launch that was, I actually walked down there, and it doesn't look like it's, it kind of looks like it's been neglected. The last time I looked I'm not saying that's the case now, because I know that as springtime arrives, that you go to work, and all of that. But when I looked at it, it look like it. I did. It was a little bit neglected, with some weeds growing up on it. And said, my question is, um, how do you consider, is it possible to have, like, kayak rentals, or is there an insurance factor involved in something like that?

Adam Grossman: The bait shop right across the levee right there, rents kayaks.

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Community Member 2: Is that a county? Is that a county? Um, you know or is that something that's private?

Adam Grossman: No, that's private.

Community Member 2: So if a private person does that, and then they go kayak, do we need to sign a waiver that you guys have?

Adam Grossman: We don't care who, if they rent them great, well, we don't need any, anybody or anything like that.

Community Member 2: Well then if something happens so they say, can they sue the county? And then you guys get in trouble with that? Should they have a waiver where they should sign that.

Adam Grossman: They sign their own waiver for liability then we're covered under a recreational umbrella.

Rich Moore: In Indiana, as long as we don't charge to use our lands there's a public use law that says we can't be sued. That's how we do the silliness at Griffin Bike Park that we do, as long as I don't charge people to get in, if they get hurt, they're on our own.

Community Member 2: Well, that's the way to generate funds though. And if you're getting ARPA funds, or even you're getting, I remember all the the, you know, fine details of of your parks and how you get them. But I just, it's a way to generate funds like the state parks I have actually did a lot of traveling over the last year and a half. And I went to quite a lot of different parks. I went to National Parks, I went to State Parks and I went to County Parks and I went to City Parks. And I really gathered a lot of different information and saw a lot of different things and a lot of different issues and sometimes, like, let's say state parks, for example, the Indiana the Turkey Run, they, you know, they have offerings where you can pay, like, for horse park riding, for example, and they generate revenue from that and that, when I didn't think that was something that, that way, you could, you could the maintenance that's necessary. I saw it on that board, your lawn care and your equipment that you need, and all that, whatever maintenance is necessary, that's expensive. And then, if you don't have enough staff, like if you need more staff, like with the trash, clean up and all that, it's just a suggestion. I didn't know if that's something, you guys are saying people can't sue, right? If you're not generating any funds. But that's not really true, I mean, you know.

Rich Moore: No they can sue if there is, you could always be sued, right?

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Community Member 1: That's why we have insurance

Community Member 2: If that's gonna fall back on the state, on the, on the, the part of the county, if there's actually neglect according to the law. I mean, if you're, if you're not abiding by the local law the higher levels will take you to the Supreme Court and you will potentially be sued even if you're not selling anything. So it's just a way to generate funds or something and to think about whether we've been having to rely on maybe organizations and businesses, that may be, it's a common nice, and you shouldn't, you know that. That's just my opinion.

Heather Cosme Milian: We do have kayak rentals here at Fowler, they go Memorial Day through Labor Day And then we're looking at maybe some different options for Hawthorn. So that one's a little harder we have a place of storm here but we don't have anywhere up there Hawthorn where we can store them, we're kind of looking to see, maybe if we can find a solution. But we do have them here at Fowler.

Community Member 4: Well and at Wabashiki, well here at Fowler you already have people here working, right? We don't have to have any guys working at Wabashiki to stand there and wait for someone to come in. And I think that would you have to hire someone and that would take funds.

Community member 2: And then you also, well, I mean, and that's, that's job creation, you know. And then I actually went to before the election, the primary elections, I spoke with some of the candidates that were running and they want to bring in people into the, into the area. They want to actually attract people to move here. And, you know, something that you talk about, and the parks is a very big part of that. You know, when people decide that they wanna make a move and they wanna live in the area, what is offered at the parks is something that they that they do consider and jobs are gonna be necessary of people. You're gonna have to attract them. And more than one kind of way we do wanna, I think we do wanna attract, you know, certain kinds of people, and, you know, people that are, you know, more well, rounded, educated in things like botany and, you know, anything that has to do with the price system and all that. And then maybe you could hire them in job creation, and we have more people, would generate more funds, and we wouldn't have to rely on federal and things like that to be able to get where this needed a number to maintenance and maintain, you know, a healthy park system.

Community Member 1: Forgive me, if I'm speaking out of turn.

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Adam Grossman: You are.

Community Member 1: I believe that would be something that should be brought up to your county council, people that are responsible for their budget. Because I know from a little bit, I know here, job creation has gone the other direction. As far as the county, the county is not terribly supportive of having more park staff. In fact, it's kind of, well, the other direction.

Adam Grossman: We have a fund and we get, there's a pie, and we get a sliver of that pie, and if we start running over and we gotta take from somebody else's part of that pie last and for several years we've been taken familiar people's part of the pie, so we're already over.

Community Member 3: What about summer help, just for summer.

Adam Grossman: We got several seasonal employees. We can't hire.

Heather Cosme Milian: We're still hiring. We're trying.

Community Member 3: We'll sure, I did one. I used to do Turkey Run, but I know what you're saying too about the trash. I ride horses in the state, in the state forest and down Brown County stuff. I can ride 12 mi out and there'll be beer cans laying everywhere. It's the people are just lazy, they're trashy. They throw beer cans or pop cans or water bottles. I mean, there ain't no reason you can't carry it back out with you.

Community Member 5: It's all recyclable too. You know, that's even worse.

Community Member 3: I mean, there's trash barrels out there. They set barrels out there, but they still throw it on the ground.

Community Member 1: Well, you know Hoosier National, is just trash.

Community Member 3: Oh, down near the Ridge in the down there. Oh, it's, it's unreal.

Community Member 5: Well, now to come to think about, what is your yearly budget for the parks?

Adam Grossman: Well it fluctuates, what we ask for and what we get.

Community Member 5: Well, just this year segment, I'll mention.

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Adam Grossman: Well, this year we're, we're hovering around very close to three million, now a lot of that is employee salaries, every employee, like our maintenance employees, cost eight or so thousand dollars each between benefits and an hourly and things like that.

Community Member 5: But, well, you know what? I think you did a fabulous job for 3 million, because that's chicken fee in today's world.

Adam Grossman: Thank you.

Community Member 1: I mean, that's, it really is. That's the bad thing too like comparing to state parks to which is state funding, you know, from all of your state taxes tax fund versus county funded, which is huge. He's getting that 108,000 times how much you charge your county tax. Divvied up among various different counting entities, right? Who else do you compete against?

Adam Grossman: Well, the health department has their own pile, has their own levied fund, and anybody that has a levied fund, it's not in the general fund. And we add some of that money is from our Non reverting fund which is money we get from camping and different things. We ask annually, off the top of my head, \$200,000 some of that out of our Non reverting, that's put on big, big projects.

Community Member 1: But now, so you're, you're facing aging infrastructure there.

Adam Grossman: Not anymore. Not as much anymore. I'm ready for the next one. How would you rank the general upkeep, the maintenance of existing parks? Luckily, out everybody surveyed, I didn't wanna step out and and say something it wasn't. Most say, 60 % say, it's good. It's, there's a big, excellent slice on there. And I don't see any I don't know but one or two people I mean is that two, two people said poor. I got glasses in the truck.

Community Member 4: Well they do you a lot of good in the truck.

Adam Grossman: Would anybody disagree with this pie. All right, let's move on to the next one. Oh, that's a lot of colors.

Heather Cosme Milian: I can read them for you.

Adam Grossman: Oh, what are your total primary reasons is to use the Vigo County parks. Please do consider considering four of those are blue.

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Heather Cosme Milian: The outdoors, enjoying nature is our number one percentage of 20 actually it's almost 24 %, 192 people use the parks for that. The second highest one is actually to walk, hike or bike for exercise, 171 people responded for that one. And then participate in family activities was our next, that's the was 11.3 % down here. That was kind of our, our numbers three. Let's see, attending programs or special events is number four, which that one generally surprises, since we've got Pioneer Days, Christmas Walk and a lot of our special programs that we do in the parks. So we definitely would like to see that people are coming out, especially to, for those specific reasons. But then also, you know, we've got like bird or wildlife observation, coming out here to meet their friends. I know I come out here to meet my friends for playdates and to walk all the time. Mountain Biking is another really big one. Fishing, a lot of people come out to fish. We do stock our ponds, that's another really big, popular one.

Community Member 3: Is there a boat docks in all these parks?

Adam Grossman: There is, Fowler's is, you'll see it on the way out the park up here. Prairie Creek, Hawthorn, Griffin, Dewey Point but it's not really a boat launch it's a kayak launch.

Community Member 2: May I ask a question? I Dobbs Park is a City Park, correct. I said, I visited Dobbs Park and they have, I've know the county. I went to the county parks and I haven't seen it. That doesn't mean that it doesn't exist, that they have a nature center. Or do any of the county parks have a nature center?

Adam Grossman: No.

Community Member 2: Is that something you have ever looked at.

Rich Moore: Somebody wants one really bad.

Heather Cosme Milian: I do, I do want one really bad. Dobbs is the only park in the area that has a nature center. The next closest nature center outside of Dobbs is Indianapolis.

Community Member 2: So I wanna make a suggestion if, if that's something that you that you do implement in the future, if that's something that does happen in the county of course, it's not a bad idea. As far as educational lies, teaching people about owls and things like that? But I, here's what I noticed, and I don't agree with is that oftentimes, in most cases, whenever they do have the nature centers they have bird feeding sections where they feed the birds bird seed. Now



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I see it as climate change and I do care about climate change and all that. But I think a lot of those kinds of things are mistakes that we've made in the past that we really didn't have our eyes open to, but are the reason, one of the reasons why we had climate change. Because the birds and people who feed the birds in their backyard become lazy. And they're not supposed to be lazy, right? They're not created to be, hey, we're gonna go to the nature center and we're gonna have our food, and we're doing that. They're not supposed to do that. They're supposed to do what they do naturally in the woods and then in the winter they're supposed to fly south and they're not. And that's a huge impact when the birds become lazy and they stook around in the winter, and they're not supposed to.

Adam Grossman: Our parks have a strict no feeding wildlife policy.

Community Member 2: I just wanna say that if you do that, that, I was just that you don't put in a bird feeder. And I've said some things to them at Dobbs Park, and they didn't take it kindly. And, but, I mean, it's a fact they, you know, birds, they don't do what they're supposed to do if they're if they're trained to be lazy. It's that simple their, human interaction is not supposed to be happening that way. And when human humans get too involved with nature, then climate change happens and it's one little thing. But over time, that one little thing, the birds like not doing what they're supposed to do naturally in, in, in nature, you know, mulberries and things like that. They, it's a huge impact on the, on the climate. It's a huge impact over time. So I do wanna suggest that if you ever do, I encourage a nature center for educational purposes, but I don't encourage that.

Adam Grossman: All right. Next, if you seldom or do not use Vigo County Parks, what are your reasons? We've got one because we don't have horseback riding tracks. Most of them reasons out there I know, because I asked earlier, they don't have time. Was the biggest reason, which is a sad thing to say, that you don't have time to go to parks. But one of the biggest reasons up there, maybe she can read the 22 % because I don't wanna walk over there when I know I'll never see it.

Community Member 3: You say something about, other night when I was up there in Terre Haute that you said something about the river bottoms or something?

Adam Grossman: Yep. And I investigated Eddie Adams is on our board, he use to work for N-R-C-S and was how they involved with all that creation down there I talked to the property manager for Wabashiki and because I made a map of there was like 600 plus acres that could easily be ridden. And matter of fact, I



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think we helped build the parking lot, like, ten years ago, for that section off Darwin Road.

Community Member 3: And we used to, before they turned it into that, where the levee is down there in West Terre Haute all the way to 70, my we used to, there was a lady there, right? We all, use to ride horses in there, horses and, but people use three wheelers and everything else. So we rode horses, and all over the place in the bottoms down in there until they changed it over this. And then that's when me and Witchell had a big go around about it.

Adam Grossman: Max is enforcing the rules now, and the rule this.

Community Member 3: This was like over horses. Me and Ben Thomas down there fishing one night on Seven Mile Island, or another Levee part. His daughter was in a she was seven years old, and we had a Barbie tent set up for to keep the mosquitos off her that night, when he tried to give us a fine saying, we just camping down there. And we ended up going down to the office down there down south because he was gonna write us a ticket just because she was in that tent. We had a light for her and we was down there fishin to keep her out of the moquitos and let her read a book and he was gonna write us a ticket and say we was camping. We had that straightened out but we use to ride horses down there, we use to ride horses here. There was a parking lot right over here. And we, they parking right all the way up around over there. There ain't nothing up here. Everything's for bicycles and walkers.

Adam Grossman: I talked to Kevin because he's the property manager, and I showed him a map, and I said, you got ready made parking lot. We've already had trails in there, and it would be real easy. And he said, was the state policy that horses are considered, what is it a motor conveyance or a motor five vehicle, or some mode of transportation. Is what the state counts a horse and that's why they won't allow that there. My best thought is to see if the state would change their classification of what a horse actually is, so that you can ride that.

Community Member 3: Why is that any different?

Adam Grossman: It's a Fish and Wildlife area, I should say because it's a fish wildlife area. It's state like Greene Sullivan, then state forest. You can ride there because they've got a different policy.

Community Member 1: That's a national forest, state forest. I think you can.

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Adam Grossman: But that's their policy is they can't come there. I forget what he said, like a motor conveyance or something, just like a four wheel or anything else. That's how they define it.

Community Member 3: You've got Putnam there, Yellowwood there.

Community Member 1: They're all state forest and if you get a fish and wildlife area like Chinook, Deer Creek, Greene Sullivan.

Community Member 3: Well I said Greene Sullivan, but then there's only two close ones there. There's nothing up here. I mean, that's that kind of, you know, you talk about the getting the money and my taxes going out on this. I ought to get to have a horse parking if all these bicycles and walkers are doing what they want.

Community Member 1: What about the Ruble? Is it feasible out there?

Adam Grossman: The problem there is we've got caps and not a lot of parking right now. That's one of the biggest problems. It would have to be here or Prairie Creek more or less.

Community Member 3: Well, see, they tried that down there at Fairbanks a few years ago, where the school is there at Fairbanks. And they had a meeting down there and this has been a few years ago and they was going to do some trails and I don't know what they had planned down there. And, but you had to become a member to it and then if I want to go ride, if I want to take you with me, just to go with me. I couldn't take him so I could go down and ride by myself, but I couldn't take nobody with him.

Community Member 1: It's a fish and wildlife area as well.

Community member 3: I don't think you can ride down there at all now. But that over there in West Terre Haute we use to ride over there when I was a kid up until oh well up until they turned that into that. I'm 63.

Community Member 1: I don't entirely disagree there because we did have horseback riding there.

Community Member 3: Yeah there and that area right over here. They had it, and we cut through and went over and went across the road and around.

Community Member 1: Maybe you could find the right venue for them.

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Adam Grossman: Yeah, I've been wracking my brain in the parks, our parks. I'm not coming up with a great solution. That state ground down there, which we own, 50/50 with them, a lot of acres of the Wabashiki Fish and Wildlife area there.

Community Member 3: Who said that the horses was a motorized vehicle?

Adam Grossman: The state regulations for a fish and wildlife area.

Community Member 1: It's a different extension, surely.

Community Member 3: Why would they say that when they got these other state parks that allow riding, I mean, Turkey Run because you can rent horses up there.

Community Member 1: I think it's the differentiation between state park, state forest and fish and wildlife area, because it's more like fish and wildlife area. There's more of a natural area, that's a protected ecosystem type thing.

Community Member 3: I can see that where you guys have that walk thing and all that up here. But from that levee on over Seven Mile Island, all way over there. The nobody owns. Nobody owns.

Adam Grossman: My proposal, to Kevin was, you might have to shut down like Turkey Season in the mornings.

Community Member 1: No, they, they used to do that here.

Community Member 3: I mean, when we rode that, the only time we don't ride that in shotgun season, deer season but other than that.

Adam Grossman: That was my proposal to him but he shot it down pretty fast than that you know my best idea the best place we have in Vigo County that I think is to get an exemption through the Fish Wildlife and that opens up a thousand acres down there. That let's be honest, there's hardly any people down there, you know, deer season, every once in a while, turkey season, you know, trapping a little bit. But if you come off Darwin Road if it's not bow season, there's nobody down there.

Community Member 1: And most people aren't trekking 15 mi back in the woods.

Adam Grossman: Man, you can cross in there and then creek crossings, where the, oh, they got little concrete basins, and creek down there. And, I mean, that would have been, you know, a nice ride.

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Community Member 5: You might bring this up with the legislature, they can change the law, they can write the law. They're not in session, of course, until on into the winter next year. But, well.

Community Member 1: They were gonna let them ride at Fairbanks, which is also a Fish and Wildlife area. There's got to be some kind of bill already right?

Community Member 5: And they may not, they may not necessarily have to write a new policy. They just might need to bring it up to somebody that's higher up and draw some attention to it, like you said, and more.

Community Member 3: I mean, you got too many parks down south and around here. Turkey Run is a state park, right? They got horse riding.

Community Member 4: But it's not a wild it's not a wildlife place.

Community Member 1: I think it's really like said, it falls into that differentiation of state park, which is that's managed by the state versus, like, state forest, like Owen Putnam, and Greene Sullivan which is your state forest, then you've got your, your fish and wildlife areas are like Wabashiki and Chinook. You should know, I think they're all managed by individual entities because, I think.

Community Member 3: But how far that you this Wabashiki or whatever how far does it go? Does it go to the levee over in West Terre Haute.

Adam Grossman: More or less but we own 50/50 with the DNR and we own, a hundred percent at Dewey Point and about a hundred yards into the wetland for Dewey Point and then it becomes 50/50 us and DNR until you get passed up to around the creek about the creek it starts transferring over mostly all DNR all the way to Darwin Road

Community Member 1: Who owns Darwin Road?

Community Member 3: Darwin Road is that pond.

Adam Grossman: It goes south down around the river.

Community Member 3: That's where that other levee is at that where that seven mile island is at. You know, we just all, I mean, we were taking wrong. We rode all over and that now down there.

Community Member 1: Who is the manager of the fish and wildlife area?

Adam Grossman: Kevin Shuttle is the property manager.

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Community Member: I didn't know, didn't it? It doesn't it revert back like to Deer Creek,

Adam Grossman: Yeah, Deer Creek Fish and Wildlife is their office. I'm gonna try to help you so you can't make any promises. But if your phone number, your emails on that sheet, I'm gonna get with Kevin and a couple of others.

Community Member 3: I'll argue with them.

Adam Grossman: I think like you said I think there's a way because there were been riding on another fish and wildlife property I think if, you get, 50 signatures from people saying we want an exemption to ride in know, this, this area, I think there's a way to do it.

Community Member 3: Has the horse people ever approach you on this.

Community Member 1: That'd be the best way to go about it. I think, is if you have some organized group, the question is.

Community Member 3: There were people right around here that still live around here still it rode the lock.

Adam Grossman: No, not that I've talked to you.

Community Member 3: The Wabash Valley Horseman Association, that's what I'm thinking about. But they were, they never approached you about riding now. They're the one that had been pulling on my ear.

Community Member 2: Yes, I had a question. So I, I'm listening to what you guys are talking about and I was thinking about something that I saw at Turkey Run they have horses there that you can rent and, I should visit Turkey Run and camp there and spend a lot of time there, took some photos and stuff. And, I here's what I like to say, Governor Holcomb signed a mental health thing, where us taxpayers pay, like, millions of dollars for this mental health thing, right? And one of the things that in my, you know, traveling around and visiting different parks they did discuss how riding horses is beneficial to people's mental health because that's a huge issue you know in schools and malls and stuff there is issues involved with, quote, mental health, unquote. So I, when I was at Turkey Run, I noticed that we had this where they were renting horses. And if that, this what you're talking about, ever evolves into something that will be offered for the people in Vigo County, and a an activity for people, people who maybe want to um improve their mental health or just enjoy the day or whatever. Right? Well, never went all into that.

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Community Member 3: Turkey Run's got one, McCormick's Creek's got that Brown County got it. And Shakamack has that are people that want to go. If you want to go rent horse, you ride in a group with people. Well, what I'm talking about bringing my own horse, right?

Community Member 2: What's your opinion about that? Do you think? Because I'm, I was just like, well, they used it as a health initiative. You know, they, they did talk more than they and that they talked about was people visiting the state parks and then horse back riding is good for therapy and disabilities.

Community Member 3: They do it for therapy, for kids, for therapy but the thing is you get it on a park basis. The park does not own, because I worked in Turkey Run for a while with the horses. And the guy for walking, he had to put in a bid on insurance. It was unreal what insurance that man had to have. He had to have 30 horses, 30 saddles, everything, 30 horses in every outfit. For 30 horses, that's a lot of money.

Community Member 1: And I believe that, like with McCormick's with their current situation now, they're borderline, like, shut down that's, that's the downside.

Community Member 3: That's also because of that storm though.

Community Member 1: Right, but they're losing the funding, like, you know. And it's, it's, this is county funded versus state.

Community Member 3: I don't think the county and the county couldn't afford, and that's, I mean, I'm talking insurance.

Community Member 2: Well, you know, they have this huge, and I can't stand it. I'm gonna be honest with you, I cannot stand it. But they have this huge mental health and hospital push, you know people and with the Governor signing the 30 million, I think it's like 30 million dollars and I don't remember what the number was but it was some outrageous number in tax payer dollars. About mental health initiative, and how they're trying to help people with that. And that I that brought that, that was brought to my mind. And whenever I was at Turkey Run, which I'm, I'm good with it, if you don't.

Community Member 3: There used to be a place right over here off of a Poplar Street. I don't want that park over there, a Poplar. It was going out to 46 out there, probably.

Rich Moore: Demming?

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Community Member 2: Dobbs?

Rich Moore: Dobbs, yes.

Community Member 3: Dobbs, yes, Dobbs. They used to have one of them there years ago.

Community Member 2: Well, here's what I noticed.

Community Member 3: It's gone, now.

Community Member 2: Here's what I've noticed at uh Turkey Run, I just want like it is, which, if you do, if that, that does ever happen like that. Because you do have a lot of medical professionals that, you know, really push for, you know, people's that, and many of it was involved, and that's one way that they think that it could be, that that ever did happen.

Community Member 1: How are they doing that, with what funding?

Community Member 2: What I noticed at turkey run was the care of the horses was completely improper they, um, they kept their horses in their manure and it was this very small cage, you know, we're talking about their small caged in area. And they kept them the whole summer. And it was a manure field, and it filled, there was no grass for them to graze. They didn't like, you know, if it should ever happen it, they should be, there should be a, um, you know, you know, how can you like, tell them We care about your mental health or we care about your disability? When the horses were completely depressed. They were depressed and I went there and was around the horses and I was around those horses and they were extremely depressed. I'm going to encourage other people to be mentally healthy. And if you want to care and part that's a lot.

Community Member 3: Most of them places, them guys, you know they're doing that, just for the month. Now, these therapeutic places. Now they have nice barns, nice pastures for kids just to come in there to do that stuff.

Community Member 2: Where though in Vigo County besides?

Community Member 5: No we don't have a place

Adam Grossman: No we're never gonna get out of the county park. The only thing I can see is, you know, send kids to St Mary's, you know, to do that kind of thing. And if they want to bring some horses out wherever it ends up being in, we're not gonna get the ball.



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Community Member 3: You know, this is, what I'm talking about, I own my horses, and I know a lot of people have, we do a lot of riding, that it would be a place that I could load up and ride. I come over here and spend about three or 4 hours a day to ride down in the bottom and stuff. That's what we used to do down there.

Community Member 2: Well, if it does go that far, you know, because I'm, I'm listening to you, you will have those people that will push that. They'll push everything because of mental health. And, you know, people have their they'll want control over their money, and they'll wanna get labor. If you go that far, they'll wanna go one step farther. And there's just, there's so much for a taxpayer dollars. Well, there's people that pay taxes. There's so much money involved in proper care of horses. The way they take care of the Turkey Run is they aren't doing what they should. It's it's inhumane what they do to the horses there. So if that should ever happen, and which I don't suggest it, because the taxpayers have to pay already paid part of it, and then proper care. Of course, this is gonna be very expensive. Plus the insurance you mentioned was, it isn't mentioned. The insurance. I don't, I don't think that that should happen.

Community Member 3: Okay, now you go up on there by that barn by Turkey Run, and you've seen that right? You picture 30 horses in there. It takes an acre and a half to two acres per animal. If it's got good grass, you're.

Community Member 2: To graze in? No. And they kept him there all summer, and I was like, oh no. How are you telling me that you're mental and you're concerned about people's mental health.

Community Member 3: All they do is feed them hay all the time.

Adam Grossman: Well, like I said I wanna help you the best I can, because we own 50/50 half of that. They own hundred percent, three quarters to half, I'll help you the best I can. And I think that's the best place we got in Vigo County to be able to do that.

Community Member 3: There was two places I was thinking about. The other one, Greg Gibson owns in there, he owns everything, but over there by Mill Dam, where they tore a dam out across the tracks, or that used to be parking there on bunch of ground. I was hoping it was gonna turn that into something.

Adam Grossman: There's been a lot of people thinking they're gonna do something with that. All right, excellent. I would like to see the VCPRD add the following things to our county parks. Equine places trails which we're, gonna work on between the state and trying to get some kind of a release there.



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Community Member 3: I-I I'll have to call that guy and ask him why that he's considered that like that.

Adam Grossman: I'll either I'll ask first what kind of exemption there may be and I'll get your his phone number and then you can call him. And I wanna say, if we, if we go towards, if Dan or somebody, but somebody, somewhere can answer the question and figure out an exemption.

Community Member 3: That just have to be because I want and be, that wouldn't even be around in your fish area or whatever. And, well, I feel the same there as when the river comes up it's gonna flood anyway.

Heather Cosme Milian: It's not just in October, it's heavily hunted all year round. There's people all every living season, trapping season there. It's very heavily used. And then, and then not just people here in this state. There's, if you go over there during especially fall deer season, people come in from all across the country to hunt down there and trap down.

Community Member 3: Well, that's just like the Hoosier National Forest down there around Norman and there that you're talking about, I mean, when it's dear season, I ain't gonna be riding no horse out there in the woods, if you know, have both seasons.

Heather Cosme Milian: It's not just dear season though, it's, it's all seasons it's used very heavily all year round for all hunting. They will be there for several different seasons, they do use that.

Community Member 3: Well Hoosier National Forest, too. I mean.

Adam Grossman: Well there will be a seasonal time.

Community Member 3: Turkey hunt, squirrel hunt, deer hunt. The turkey hunters and the boq hunters don't bother me, right? But the guys up back in there with guns deer hunting they are gonna shoot my horse. I mean it ain't gonna happen.

Community Member 1: I mean, if you got a established riding trail, though, to put stakes on the end, no, I mean, within 50 ft of riding trail, or hundred and 50 ft. and I think that's.

Community Member 3: Well, like down there. They take when deer season comes in, they stop all riding. And they don't until that deer season's over with, and then you can go back and ride. That's what they close down during the gun

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season. Every year, you ain't allowed to go in there and ride. Which that's been, I mean, that's in November or December anyhow. I mean, right?

Adam Grossman: Well, the survey says that more people want more trails and paths to walk on, more programming and activities, more benches, shelters, gathering areas was another big one. We have more accessible play equipment, and then adding equestrian trails in there. Anything missing from survey says over 200 people.

Community Member 2: May I, may I make a suggestion. Actually, I have a couple of suggestions. And I saw on that chart what you were working on, some of the things were addressed. Like the playground equipment, and I noticed in all the different parks that have visited that in some cases. And it's very sad, but it's true, it does happen. And with a lot of things are happening over the last year or so with the border crossing and all that, and if you just go and if you've been listening to the news and these drug cartels and stuff in the government, and, you know, one thing I didn't notice was that tactic that the drug cartels are using is that they're actually going on to playgrounds, and they're lacing the equipment with, um, sticky heroin kind of stuff. Okay? I mean I cried my eyes out when I learned that. I mean it broke my heart. It totally broke my heart. So I do wanna, I think that it should be a priority. Okay? Like we have there on the list of priorities that someone is hired to in a position of maintaining proper cleanliness of the playground equipment like daily, because they move in and they do stuff like that. And they do because they actually wanted to addict the children when they're young. If they get them addicted, when they're young, they'll be addicts when they're older, and that's what they want. Okay? And I'm just, I know it's a serious issue, but it should be a prioritized issue of all the money that you spend regarding, or, you know, and the future of the children, um, I think that, that it, it broke my heart when I learned it okay. And I did learn that, because when I-I did take the time I was blessed truly blessed to be um when my father passed away left in his will some things for me. He was an avid camper. He loved camping, and one thing he wanted was for me to travel around to different parks and learn what he knew. And my dad was also a veteran. So whenever in that kind of stuff, it was, it was really sad. But I think that there should be, and this should be at the county level, the state level, the, the federal level, the, the the city level. Every park should have that type of maintenance that someone is hired to make sure that that equipment is kept properly clean, at least on a daily basis, if not more often than daily. Because they, that's what they do. You know, I mean, they're cruel. They're vicious. They're evil. They're evil. They don't care what they do to little children. They don't care at all. They just want to, you know, take control, that's what they do. So I just wanna mention that as a safety you know security,

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standpoint I you know. I've been, around veterans all my life and I've learned a lot of different things that you know that people do that when they wanna do really bad stuff that they shouldn't be doing. That's one thing that, that, that I learned that they did. So if you don't already have that, I did see that on the list of our infrastructure, that was something to then that's something that I'll highly suggest that you do.

And then one other thing, and I think that's all that I wanted to talk about tonight, because I've been running my mouth a lot and I know I should apologize for that. Please forgive me, but I do care about, you know, our park systems. Um, Teddy Roosevelt was born on my birthday. My dad named me after Teddy Roosevelt, and he initiated the and enacted the National Park System in the United States. He was president in the beginning of 1901 until 1909. And, um, you know, my dad was an avid camper, like I said. And I just, you know, that it really means a lot to me, park systems that I wanna say this in all of the parts that I've visited, almost none on this side of the of the country, from Mississippi, all the way up to Michigan, I visited a lot of different state parks, city parks and county parks all right. And all the way in Pennsylvania, um, here's what I-I think also needs to be seriously addressed and that we should take the leadership role in this is that um most parks don't have privacy showers and privacy bathrooms for their campers, and I think that should be an option. I'm not saying that because I realized that there's a lot of money involved in in what would be necessary to to offer that to campers. But me, because of little children, I when I'm in a shower like here, and and I take one, when I was in the shower litte children can walk in there and I can be totally naked and that's completely irresponsible. That's irresponsible. If, for for a child, your children are small, they have much to learn, but they don't understand basic laws like infringement. That's against the law. Invasion of privacy is against the law. And when, when you're in the shower, and I'm not saying everybody gives, a lot of people get offended when they bring this up, and not everybody does agree with that, and they'll have to, because you can't control what other people do. You can't control them or what they do with their children even but me personally, I don't think that if I'm in the shower that a child should be allowed in there at all, or even another adult. I don't even want another adult in there when I'm in the shower. But yet, private showers and most parks on this side of the country I-I don't know about and you know the other, half of the country but they're not privacy for even using the toilet there should be a privacy toilet and a privacy shower, at least offered even if it has to be separate, which it should be as an as an option for those who don't want that, and I didn't want that. And almost every park that I went to, I didn't have choice.

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And people would barge in and then bathe my prayers on when I'm on the toilet, at least don't be offended by the this is rude, okay? But when I'm on the toilet and I'm having a bowel movement, I don't want people hearing them, just disgusting. It's not their place like that's my privacy. It's not, it's also not mentally healthy. It encourages people to believe and think that it's okay to be around other private parts, and that's not okay. There's nothing right about it.

Community Member 3: If they're going to do that, they're gonna have to change all the school systems.

Community Member 2: I agree and I did speak with all the school systems about that too.

Community Member 3: Because boys locker rooms and girls locker rooms are all set up like that.

Community Member 2: And I spoke with them about that. I mean, they're all sitting there like that.

Community Member 3: Hawthorn Park over there last year, they had trouble with the homeless coming in there.

Community Member 2: They don't care, they don't care.

Community Member 3: Who don't?

Community Member 2: I know people. People who do stuff, they do stuff like they barge in. They don't understand. When when I'm in the bathroom and somebody's in the bathroom, they're using the bathroom, I turn right around and I walk out. I don't wait. I don't go in there with him. I wait until they finish and I going there. And I-I try to keep it private and public behavior is a lot of reason why people are mentally ill because they think that's okay they think that's normal. You know, from the time they're little, they're taught when they when they visit a Walmart, it's okay to walk in on somebody and they're using the toilet. It's not okay, it's mentally unhealthy. But they're taught that's normal. They think that's normal and in the school systems it's the same way. I spoke with my senator, my representative, about the school systems is the same issue, and it's the same issue with the park systems. And I'm just suggesting with you, with the funds that you do receive that all at least offering a privacy shower and a privacy bathroom for campers or people that are visiting the park. It should be an offer, and it's not. And that's, that's a ground. That's, it's, there's nothing, it's morally reprehensible. There's nothing moral about it. It's unethical, and it's immoral so, and it's really against the law. Invasion of privacy is against the law. But yet we're

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telling little children walking into Walmart, or the state parks, or the local parks, and break the law.

Community Member 3: Well, I don't understand, in Brown County and all of them parks I go to you down there their shower houses have got doors and locks on each one.

Community Member 2: Well having a door that locks in not good enough. It really needs to be an enclosed space, like an enclosed, like, if you visit, um, some of the Casey's gas stations, for example, not all of them, the like the one in West Terre Haute, the Casey's gas station it's a complete privacy bathroom.

Adam Grossman: Well, Griffin Bike Park has got family restrooms. We stopped design and cost that thing a year to come out with family restrooms that lock. So we're, we're heading that way and any new restroom we build are gonna be just like that.

Community Member 2: And showers too, I that's just how I felt about it. Was I felt, I felt violated, completely violated. Okay, but it's not just here. It's the country.

Adam Grossman: All right, we're, we're losing time. So, all right, moving on to the next one. What additional recreational programs do you want us to offer. Um, 21 % special events is a big one people believe people want more special events. Um, I don't, I don't know where we're specific on what kind of special events. But, you know, we've got Pioneer Days, Mini Pioneer Days and all kinds of biking events and different things. But people want arts and sports and fitness, individual or team adventure races.

Heather Cosme Milian: Number two is outdoor or environmental programs.

Adam Grossman: We, we offer quite a bit of that with this last master plan was getting the word out, you know what we offer.

Community Member 3: How long is it going to be before we build a horse track over here.

Adam Grossman: So I don't know.

Community Member 3: Well I want one build right over here.

Adam Grossman: I don't know.

Community Member 3: You watch, Greg Gibson is going to build somewhere.

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Adam Grossman: It'll be maybe by St. Mary's.

Community Member 3: There's gonna be hotels along 42 and the Big Horse Track, either that or the fairgrounds. They wanted to move fairgrounds once over this way. So, like I said, the other night up there. I'm paying too much taxes now, and these fools is getting me.

Community Member 5: You know, I thought of something that might fit into I and I know you can do a lot of great stuff with environment and with kids, um, in fact, it's pretty impressive. I think when you said, we don't get the word out, I-I think that so many people if they if, they knew what you had what you did they'd go, man because it it it really, is a lot but they just don't know.

Heather Cosme Milian: Back on this one, the why don't use so the second one, the other, when I was going through, everyone wrote in there, I do use the parks. Um. So that one was a little when we do this one in another five years, we now know that to edit this question. But then number three, which I actually feel like should be, number two, was they don't know what's available.

Community Member 1: I want to slide on the level about how it's broadcast.

Heather Cosme Milian: That's, our next slide is, one of the things that was really prevalent in our last master plan was that people just didn't know what we had. And even since I've taken over, we really are trying to push the parks and what's available. And we kind of decided to make 2024 the year of our county parks. So we every the first Friday of every single month, Rich and I are going on Channel Two on Good Day Live to feature all the programs and activities we have going on in the park for the month and to also highlight some of what's available. This month is National Bike Month so we've been doing little bike tidbits here and there to help promote our bike park. July is National Parks and Recreation Month, so every single park in our county is gonna get a big feature on our Facebook and all of our social media in our, on our website and then we're also gonna get with the news stations as well. So that way we can do a big feature on all of our parks, to help kind of get people the word out there, and so they realize what we have, what we have to offer, our programs that are available.

One of the things that we came up with since the last master plan was our park magazines, that we now are working on really getting distributed out to different organizations, the convention center, the CVB, in different places like that, they're at the library. So that way people can take a magazine and it features all the parks, everything that's available, and all sorts of different information in them and just kind of making sure that we are trying to get more information out.



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They're making sure that you guys know what we have, know what's going on and things like that. We definitely since I've taken over, especially, like if you guys are on Facebook and all, we now post every single day on Facebook, at least once a day. Most days, twice a day, just so we can try to get, you know, that information out there because I-I do think that's one of our downfalls was that people just didn't quite know what we had.

Community Member 5: I know um I, was recently at Amber's Walk in Elliot Woods and there were so many people talking about it that didn't know where Elliot Woods was. And there were a lot of people that wanted to come that day because I'm in the invasive weed group and, um, you know, they were like, oh, I hate it that we can't go that day. So I think, you know, that would be something great to have that more often. And it's just such a neat little woods in, you know, um, it was, it was, it was really warm with it too. I mean, you run that walk.

Heather Cosme Milian: It was, that was great. That was a perfect day for it, too.

Rich Moore: She came back later talking about how great it was.

Community Member 5: I came back later and man, I'm, I'm considered myself a little mini authority on Japanese bush honeysuckle. Something we did.

Heather Cosme Milian: We talked a lot about honeysuckle. But, I mean, that was one of the things that we, we started is now we're gonna do monthly hikes. So, and we this summer are gonna partner with the library to hopefully get some kids out from in town out here to hike, it's part of their summer reading program. So it's just about getting a word out there.

Rich Moore: It's tough getting it out there because everybody is getting their news and advertisements a different way. It was all great when it was in the newspaper, but the newspapers not reaching what they used to. She can probably tell you firsthand that Channel I Two is struggling because everybody's streaming now, and that we don't watch Channel Two as much. You know, facebook changes almost weakly the way we're doing our advertisement. We gotta change constantly. Everything's just constantly moving, and it's tough to keep up with. It's very difficult.

Community Member 1: Things are going more to podcasts and not radio.

Rich Moore: I just learned Instagram, that was pretty cool too.

Adam Grossman: 30 years too late.

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Rich Moore: That's right. That's, it's difficult.

Heather Cosme Milian: He asked me, heather, do we have, you should get an Instagram for the parks. And I was like Rich, we have an Instagram. I post on it every day.

Adam Grossman: All right, I'm ready for the next one.

Heather Cosme Milian: Which is what we're just talking about.

Adam Grossman: I'm sorry to say, as we're talking about this, but we got our magazines now, and I think CVB's gonna put more money in to get more magazines, get them, get them out to everybody.

Community Member 5: And what, what do you , what did you say? CVB?

Adam Grossman: The Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Community Member 5: Convention and Visitor's Bureau. I couldn't get that second v there. I thought, that's what you were saying. Just a little Hoosier dialect there.

Heather Cosme Milian: I trip over the full, the full saying.

Adam Grossman: I guess we're at the next. All right. Well, this is kind of the last deal. You know, some of the highlights from what we've seen, new amenities, playgrounds, outdoor classrooms, additional trails and benches, better playground, paved pump track at Griffin, um, maintenance, more walking trails.

So anything else you wanna add that the survey has not covered, that we've not talked about tonight.

Community Member 1: I do, I get, I know this. Yes, I get asked this. I don't know how many people have asked me, and I know it's probably not gonna happen, but probably I know that Fowler is the only place that has a beach anymore. And Hawthorn used to have a beach, but you wouldn't believe me, how many people ask me about the Hawthorn beach and if that's ever gonna be a thing again.

Adam Grossman: This is the first year I've not gotten a call yet so far this year.

Community Member 1: Well, it said, I mean, it's shame on me. But it said online, like three or three years ago, it was still open. So we were drove down there. It used to be here. I remember a summer camp out here, but I don't know I was.



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Adam Grossman: What's your question? What's what? What are you, what are you trying to stay here?

Community Member 1: I know that you don't do lifeguards here is, is there any possibility of opening another beach?

Adam Grossman: The possibility of opening up another beach no, so I'm just not gonna. The possibility of a different aquatic feature, possibly. It's gonna be costly.

Community Member 1: I'm just bringing forward what people ask.

Adam Grossman: This master plan is not reflecting it as much the one before. Everybody and their brother wanted some kind of a splash pad. I probably should have just brought everybody a sprinkler to take home, but, um, Hawthorn would have been the only one ever thought about one.

Community Member 1: Um, maybe something like that. I think could be a good draw.

Adam Grossman: Well, we thought about Fowler's beach now, is it gonna have to be completely refurbished or do something else with it? We're looking into like an inflatable Ninja Warrior, course type thing that would go in the beach over here. But then that would require lifeguards, and that would require money to check in.

Community Member 1: I think it's all right thing that really doesn't cost, obviously it's gonna cost up to eat, but doesn't really cost a lot. And it's free for people to use while they're here. And I think that gets a lot of it.

Adam Grossman: We're gonna have some better survey numbers this year, one of the survey last year, and kind of fell through, but I don't know how many people use it. How many are the same people that.

Community Member 1: Ee are down there when we can, I mean, I know some people don't like swimming in the lake anymore. That's kind of the thing.

Adam Grossman: No, that's the trend. That's the trend is people don't like the fish in there with them. They don't like snakes swimming by. They don't like some of the weeds that float by every once in a while.

Community Member 1: But I do think it's for a for a no cost option, and really the only one.

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Community Member 2: May I ask one more question. I noticed too that the Emerald Ash Borer there's been a lot of damage done, not just in this area, but south and in different parts of Indiana, really different parts of the country. And then there's a Japanese Creeping can't remember name.

Adam Grossman: The Asian Longhorn Beetle.

Community Member 2: As well known well there's a, it's a long it's cut oh okay It's, really bad in day to be national forest in Kentucky. It's really bad in Mississippi, I mean, miles and miles and miles and miles of it. Now, I haven't really seen it out here, but I would be concerned about whether it would spread up here if they don't take care of it. I did call the D-N-R in Mississippi and I called the the D-N-R in Kentucky and you know suggested that they, do something about it it's way out of control I mean. I couldn't believe how much of just miles and miles of it but I went out just the Emerald Ash Borer around here. Now, I don't know, as I was walking, and it looks like you guys have got it in your control here.

Adam Grossman: Well we've treated several Ash Trees around the parks.

Community Member 2: My question is this because I noticed, like, on, on Interstate 70 between Marshall and Casey on that side of, on the, the side of the highway West, it's just, um, west east. There's a lot of dead trees because of that. And I also notice that Lincoln Trail State Park, there's a lot of dead trees because of that. And they really are working really, um, really diligently, especially at Lincoln Trail, to, you know, to eradicate it. But my question is, um, and I know where it came from, it came from Korea, right? Like when they did a lot of the shipping from overseas that they actually are arrived from Korea. But how does it, like, how is it transfer? Like does it, how is it spread?

Adam Grossman: We're way past that, it's everywhere.

Community Member 2: I don't know where I.

Community Member 1: I get behind where they have I remember for a long time they were not letting anybody transport any bark wood in any of the parks because it's behind the bark. They get in behind the bark, then make little grooves.

Adam Grossman: The main wave is already passed. We've treated out of our 30 trees, just in this park, just as far as the county goes we've generally treated. We'll keep treating those, but eventually we expect the way we die down, and you can back off your treatment a little bit. But, and the only thing we can do to

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save one was treat it. Or blue ash is a little bit resistant to it, or the blue ash tree on the point over here, but we didn't treat it. What's better enough? Treated to treat it. The only thing you can do this treat whatever tree you want to keep and say.

Community Member 1: We're past the spread where the control, or past, past the control. You know, really, I mean, you know, what's been hit is gonna has been hit, and you're just stuck on the maintenance of anything else.

Adam Grossman: Anything else? Horses, got it, beaches, beaches, that's. And that's a, all right, I think that's it, isn't that it. So if you have anything else, if you not take the survey yet, the iPad are up here for you to take it online. There's another public meeting coming on June 27 at the Annex building at 06:00, and then I'll get in touch with you hopefully shortly. I'll talk to Kevin.

[Sign-in sheet for June 27, 2024 meeting and agenda](#)

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NAME	BEST CONTACT	Affiliation/Interest
Darla Moore	812-251-6239	Griffin Lake Park
Dan Bradley	812-870-7752	Riverscape
Donna Williams	812-240-1987	Riverscape
Cheri Bradley	812-870-5618	County Resident
Michael Shaw	812-243-3466	riverSCAPE
Gerrit Varner	812-249-8270	riverSCAPE

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Master Planning Public Meeting #2:**

Date: Thursday June 27, 2024  
 Location: Vigo County Council Chambers  
 155 Oak St  
 Terre Haute, IN 47807  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.

**Agenda:**

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Department  
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1. Introductions
2. Master Planning Process
3. The past 5 years and success
4. Public input
  - a. Survey questions, how are we doing
  - b. Input

Meeting Transcript:

Adam Grossman: Oh, I'll go ahead and get this started while she's updating. Introductions, y'all know me.

Brian Gilbert: Brian, Assistant Superintendent in the parks.

Rich Moore: I'm Rich, I manage the Griffin Bike Park.

Heather Cosme Milian: I'm Heather Cosme Milian, and I'm the natural resource programmer for the parks.

Adam Grossman: I'll take you through the process and the master planning process for us, it's a lot in the same as the city parks. We kind of somehow we fell, we aligned on our master plan corridors. So we're doing them at the same time. But spring we started, launched the survey. Heather tells me, we've got 394 people have taken the online survey so far, which is more than our last time around. And we pushed hard last time to try to get people to take the survey. And we're not quite done. It closes Sunday, I think. So people still have a chance in getting it out there. So spring, we launched the survey. May we had a stakeholders meeting, that was a really successful meeting. I think we had 30 people, stakeholders. Riverscape, Bryan was here, Commissioners, Council, Thrive. You know, anybody we could think of that would wanna come give input and that was a really productive meeting. We spent an hour talking about parks and going through some of this stuff within partnerships, directions, and we've already capitalized on some of the conversations we had. So that was really, really good productive, good meeting.

This is the second of two public meetings. We had one at Fowler Park. We had six people, roughly six people. So we're, we're lagging behind this meeting. This is our second meeting, public meeting. By October, we go back, we analyze the data from the survey, see what people have been saying, what they want, what

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the trends are, and submit it to the state by October for review. They kick it back then our board adopts the master plan through DNR. So that's a real quick run down of the process. Real quick, the last five years we'll talk about successes from the last plan. Now, why are we doing this plan well our board is eligible for other monies, if we have an adopted and approved master plans in the state, is probably the number one reason, other than community input, community survey and get a feel for what people are want in our community.

The last master plan, a lot of our stuff is over 40 years old. Parks are falling apart and number one thing that come out of those surveys was pay attention to existing parks. Improve in existing parks was number one to come out of the survey, which was awesome. That aligned exactly with what we needed to do. So we went through and replaced water lines, every water line in the parks is new now, so we just had our first water leak last week on some of the new stuff. We went back eight years ago now and redid. But we did a lot of electrical lines, reroofed cabins, installed kayak launches, put in a rental cabin, paved and micro sealed all the parks. Come this year, all the parts will have been microsealed and paved and crack sealed. They were in dire need of that, Hawthorne is due this year. So in October this year, Hawthorne Park will be micro sealed and paved in some crossovers. Completed the RTP grant in Bicentennial Park, been ten years in the making at that point. So it's awesome get that finally done and off our plate looks awesome.

One thing that come out of that master plan was people don't know where our parks are. People don't know anything about the parks. So we produce a magazine, now we produce a yearly magazine, but if you've not had one, there's some up here on the table. Just let people know, where are parks? What do we have? And really, where are they. We hand a bunch of those out at the Boat, Sport and Travel Show and let people within that probably three hour radius, most people we talk to know we're here and what we have. Skip through some of this Ruble Park opened, Griffin Bike Park completed a million dollar grant for additional trails, and now, in this year, we've signed, or we've gotten laid a building at Griffin Bike Park, community building, vendor space and office space that checks boxes off and before I go any further, if you, if you're not bored to tears after the meeting, you're all gonna look at our action plan from the last master plan. This is the single one thing from the last master plan that I looked at a lot. And that says a lot, because most people do a master plan, they just put it up on the shelf somewhere and forget it. We had an actual plan was what we wanted out of the last master plan. And we go through and start making check marks on things that we completed. And we've, we've completed about everything on the last master plan. And there's a few things still hanging out there. But if you want to look at some of the things have come out of the last master plan, what we've accomplished, it's right here.

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West Terre Haute Shop was one, we need a presence in West Terre Haute, riverSCAPE was able to help us with PJ Trucking, relinquish property, got that frontage, got the shop and now we have people over there to help run trails and keep that property up and going. Mill Dam, whether people liked it or not, it's done. And we, we own it now, and got that project done. Online reservations, when we did this, we didn't have online reservation system yet. That changed our department overnight. People had come in physically and write us a check for a shelter rental. First come first served camp in cash and check only. We didn't have a way to take a card. When we started taking cards, we started getting a lot more out of town visitors, and our money tripled overnight. Just for the ease of I know I can have that campsite and I can swipe my card at midnight at home when I know I want to go camping. Shelter rental, I love to see people, but hardly anybody comes in here anymore because it's so easy to swipe a card online, rent shelter and made it made it way easier for everybody. So I think our patrons like it. We actually went to card only everywhere this year, and I don't think I've heard any complaints from it.

Community Member: That means you a made a mistake if you never hear any complaints.

Adam Grossman: I never heard anyone but I was afraid at one park specific we'd get a lot of screaming about no cash but that reduces our liability. We don't have to worry about counting down cash, taking it to the bank or holding cash at the gatehouse. Way safer and easier for us, and accountability is always there at the computer. So that has went better than I thought it would at this point. So that's a real quick overview, just some of the high level stuff that we accomplished in the last five years.

We'll go through some of these survey questions up here, and before I get started in that, and Heather's probably gonna help me, because the last time I tried to read these, I didn't have glasses on. It was a struggle. Yours don't work for me but the big take away from a lot of this, after looking through it, Heather was nice enough to update our numbers. So this is real time, all 394 survey results for you guys today to see what are people talking about? What they wanna see, because we wanna see, bounce off you guys. Is there anything we're missing? Anything we need to add? You know, any other input that people maybe are missing? Or make sure you take the survey if you're not taking it you got until Sunday. But the big take ways, looking through the data trails, our last master plan, people are obsessed with splash pads. They're obsessed with all kinds of other things, and people have said that a few times, but that's not even the top ten trails across the board. At almost every park is number one. And I'm kind of excited to see some of these things, because I think we can knock off the top three off our list here pretty quickly in the next couple of years. So trails was number one, being outdoors, and outdoor programming was a big one. Like 500 times, through 394 people, they said, we wanna be here because we wanna be



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outdoors. We wanna be able to hike, be outdoors and outdoor programming. Well, that's one that we have already been talking about, getting live animal shows and getting other stuff outside so easily can hit that one.

A great takeaway for us too most everybody said our restrooms are really good shape, so that's always good to know, too. Camping, there are people that put camping numbers on there, but not as many as you think. Fowler would be like 50 some people say, I come here to camp, while 200 say, I'm here for the trails. And Fowler, they've got to be bleeding over to Griffin. They got some decent trails, but they don't have that many miles. What I'm seeing in that is, I think a lot of people are coming from out of town now to camp that maybe aren't necessarily taking this survey. The people are taking it from in town aren't necessarily camping, but they're using the trails and the playgrounds. So, which is, is good. I mean, we've got several people from Terre Haute that camp with us, it's not like they quit. I just think we're bringing in more people from out of town. And our group, the people that are filling out this survey, use our trails and our playgrounds. That is the main take away. So I'll shut up now. We'll go through some of this stuff, and I'm sure Heather can help me.

Heather Cosme Milian: If you need a reminder what our parks are, you know.

Rich Moore: And, and just F-Y-I don't know how she updated this because she's been out at Griffin Bike Park with me the last three days directing traffic and we've had like 50 people a day out helping us clean it up I don't know how she had time to do this.

Adam Grossman: Actually, before we get started in this, you guys want to give an update for what's happening right now and how the last plan went.

Rich Moore: Yeah, the park is built out. Griffin is done as far as building trails, and the Shepherds, Gene Griffin and his family, the Shepherds of Griffin Bike Park, are still active in the park and raising funds. And they pay for another full time guy for me at the park to help me do maintenance. So that's their main goal is to do that. And then they're working on adapter friendly stuff, not necessarily handicapped level stuff, but they wanna have events for these folks that are in their chairs and and be able to do stuff with that. They're working hard with that. I've still got the Friends of Griffin Bike Park that help me cut trees out. They were out there with me last two nights till 09:30. They help me run all events. So, so I get to see her once in a while. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't be able to do events at the bike park. And I got upcoming events. We got a really unique one. We just met with snowless dog sled racing in December. They got dogs. They put, they hook to bikes and these and up to eight dogs. The guy told me today, and they'll be ripping around our bike park with these dogs. When I told him, the first thing he said was, have you been drinking? I'm like, no.



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Community Member: How many people do that?

Heather Cosme Milian: It's a big thing.

Rich Moore: It's apparently it's a big thing. They're bringing the Nationals here to to race. They're gonna run on foot with the dogs at Liverne Gibson, and they're gonna do the bike park and do the bike part there. So I rode the guy around.

Community Member: Is it a two wheeled bike?

Rich Moore: They have some three wheels too. He said, they have trikes as well. I if you've seen the videos of this they're these dogs are pulling them through they're doing 25 mile an hour.

Community Member: I believe that I just figured it'd be be a whole lot safer with four wheels.

Rich Moore: I agree.

Community Member: It, if you wanna stop or something. You're going splat.

Community Member: What time of year do they do this?

Rich Moore: But we're up. They're gonna do it in December.

Adam Grossman: Hopefully it'll definitely be frozen.

Rich Moore: The thing is, the bike park at this point. We had the big rain on Tuesday, and it hit hard. And we're out there on four wheelers yesterday and today, and it's not hurting the trails at all. The bike park has seasoned enough that we can get right back on the trails right after it rains. It's really neat. It's really, we're really happy with it. We got our regular events coming up. We're still doing our races and our kids events, our, our kids team. This year's up over 30 kids on Wednesday nights. And we're having a really good time with that. And he talked about the building that's getting built. We've got some money that come in through different avenues, through ARPA and EDIT, and the and the Health Department has really donated a lot of money. And they're helping us do programs like our Trips for Kids, where we bring kids from in town that would otherwise not have a chance to ride. We got bikes. If you've ever seen my office at the bike park, you just kind of swerve through to get to my desk, because it's all bikes everywhere all the time.

Adam Grossman: Go around the holes in the floor, too.

Rich Moore: They're helping with that. We're gonna do some other programming with them. Um, near and dear to my heart, since I had a heart attack. We're

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gonna do some heart stuff with, with, with 4-H and with the health department. Um, the community building we're looking at building is a 40 by 80 building. It's gonna go right in the center of the park. We're really excited. It's gonna have an open space and gonna have a little office for me, in a, in a pro shop, to where we can sell inner tubes and just small stuff. It depends on what the the people wanna bring out. But we're right now, we're in the middle of digging out like everybody else did. We got hit just as hard as they did in town. Adam was out with us today. She's been out all week. We got some trees out there that we could hold hands and not reach our way around, just laying on a trail. And it's beautiful trees. I cut up a sycamore last night and it's like daggon it and it's just laying on a trail but things are going good. It's all but the storms, we're, we're great.

Heather Cosme Milian: And we're supposed to get more in the next week or so. So, I just started, actually, this past, working remotely in July. Well, we still lived in Florida, waiting to move back up here, back up home. Then we moved up here in September, and that's when I really started. So literally, like two weeks before Pioneer Days. So we're still, I'm kind of still hittin, getting my feet wet and kind of hittin the ground, running a little bit. And we're, we'll still do our big traditional events, Christmas Walk and Pioneer Days and all that fun stuff that people love. But, something that's really important to me is making sure that we get the kids out and in nature and, and learning about the world around them and the parks, and connecting, just kind of getting out there and connecting, learning how to hike, learning how to fish. And doing kind of that thing. I love doing kids programs. So we're, we're really excited and looking forward to to kind of expanding on that a little bit. We had a really great spring break camp. We just did a summer camp with some kids. And the, the kids have never fished before. That we got out there and we got fishing, and hopefully we're getting more of them into biking and teaching kids how to hike. We're doing now monthly hikes for families to just come out and all come hike together with as a family, with my family, my family comes out and joins us too. And that's great for, you know, people that don't know how to hike. And maybe you might get a little intimidated and, well, I don't wanna go out there and get lost on a trail. I don't know how to read a map. So we go over all of it, and we walk through the map as we go along all the trails. And that's a lot of fun. And we try to point out, you know, any, any trees and animal tracks and stuff that we can find along the way. Especially this month's hike and next month's hike, we're doing a partnership with the Vigo County Library. Their summer reading program is Adventure starts at the library, and we're continuing that as it starts there, but it doesn't stop. It continues in the parks. So we're trying to grab those kids and drag them out into the parks. And some of their challenges are to attend events that I have going on in the parks and to go out and go on hikes with me and some of that fun stuff.

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And we're doing our summer in the village that's been very popular this summer so far. We've had kind of themed days to try to draw people out and kind of gain a little bit of attention, which has been really exciting. We've had in May, the theme was gardening, so people could come out and learn how to plant their own garden while the villagers planted their garden. This month, we kind of focused more on candle dipping and soap making and some of that kind of stuff. Next month, we'll be focusing on the trades, so that'll be a lot of fun, and then we'll get, kind of start gearing into Pioneer Days after that. So we've been a real busy summer, and we just keep adding more programs and having a lot of fun with it.

Community Member: So how many kids usually are participating?

Heather Cosme Milian: It varies. We've had hikes that like heck, our Makeful syrup hike that we had in February, when it was only 30 degrees out. We had about 50 people out on that hike. So it's anywhere from just a couple kids show up to a lot. So we, I that's been really, really exciting, and we, we love that. So was a little disappointing, since we didn't get to have maple syrup this year. Mother Naure didn't cooperate with us, but we still went out and talked about the process and kind of how that happens and all that stuff. And they loved it. They still had a great time. And it was a nice little 1 mile walk to get them out and not in the house for a little bit in the middle of winter.

Adam Grossman: What do you got?

Brian Gilbert: Mine follows pretty well. Adams I take care of most of the maintenance at the park. I'm in charge of all the maintenance people, so it's not as glamorous, but we're the back that keeps the parks all going. Take care of a lot of sewage, water, camp issues. Reservation was a great thing for all of us. It made everything easier to cut down on man hours. It's lots simpler for everybody, streamlined it I think, no, like right now. We're also digging out of trees, trying to take care of all the trails and all the parks, including Wabshiki. So it's about all I got.

Adam Grossman: I'm gonna stand up so I can see the screen better, but we'll cruise through this for a moment. That may as well see more. Let me now. Stand right here next to the screen so I can see it. It's the same thing you said. I can read it. Yes, today. All right. So how often people use the parks? I can see because you got the numbers right at the thing here, this time three times a week or fewer. 121, once or twice a month. 131, that was the majority of the people. So they're at least using it once or twice a month with some everyday users, and we know who those are. Well, all right. Next one, she's like, I can't believe that the one already. All right, so trails are number one. We talked about that every park system. That was kind of the thing that got me like, Fowler Park camping's, only 59. We know we have more campers than that. I just think we're our core. 59. People are saying, I camp, but we're drawing those people from out of town. But

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the numbers upon their village, 157. But park trails, 200 people for park that's a, that's a large number. For Fowler. I think some of those may be bleed bleeding to Griffin. Fowler and Griffin are connected now by a trail. Maybe they're confused what, what trail systems, what park. But if 200 people are surveying saying they love the trails at Fowler, that's great.

Heather Cosme Milian: Our last family hike, it was flooded with people. We had our little group out and just constant. There were a lot of times that we had to stop and get out of the way to let other people pass, because there just were so many people out on the trails that day.

Adam Grossman: So Griffin Bike Park, of course, Griffin is a lot of hiking trails. Trail riding. At 93 Pump Track, they're a little more, a few more numbers across the board.

Community Member: How many walkers do you get at Griffin Bike Park?

Rich Moore: You get it a lot. We get quite a few, and we encourage it. And we've got the new Striker Lake Loop trail that ended up being a better walking trail than a riding trail. I-I hate that trail to ride it and I tell everybody that wants to listen.

Community Member: Is there actually a dedicated walking trail that bikers are not supposed to be on?

Rich Moore: No there's not so the rules are a little different there. The walkers have to watch for the bikers. But normally, normally the bikers will stop and talk to you because they don't mind taking a breath. You know what I mean? They take a break. So everybody's pretty everybody's pretty friendly out there. We don't, we don't have too many. I'm on a lot of different groups on Facebook and whatnot, and they seem to have trouble with the groups interacting together. The hikers fight with the bikers, we don't have that. We just don't have conflict out there for whatever reason.

Heather Cosme Milian: Usually they see the bikers, see the hikers long before the hikers know that there's a bike coming, and they'll holler.

Rich Moore: And the hikers don't, they don't get on the trails that are more technical. So the blue trails and the Black Diamond trails, the hikers stay off of the other trails. We expect to see people, you know, the green trails, the wide stuff. We hope to anyway.

Adam Grossman: Our playgrounds, any parks that have them, are receiving into the hundreds reviews that, you know, that's their most used amenity. Of course, we always see a lot of kids in the playgrounds, but any playgrounds we have they, they say they're using them. So that's, that's good to see. Ruble Park doesn't have any playgrounds. A few less people probably visit it compared to

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some of the other parks, but still hike and trails, and that's the main thing to do out there. So we've got a hundred people saying they like to walk the hike and out there. Um, let's see here. Hawthorne Park. And again, 31 for the campgrounds. I'm kind of surprised that it's actually only 20 lower than Fowler's. That's our second most visited campground. Again, I think we're pulling a lot of out town visitors from there trails. 205 people say, that's the most used humanity that there using these trails. Which is not surprising. Hawthorn is a pretty big hub for running and walking, running clubs, things of that nature, Hawthorn is a little less surprising. And again, the playground usage is up there as well, as long as the National Heritage Trail access.

Dewey Point. Let's see here. A 113 for the Wabashiki Trail, and then they're kind of scooped out. After that Butterfly Garden 40-42, people have been saying, I really like to walk the butterfly garden. So it's really nice to see the survey say people are using it. It's a really nice section to walk to off the pedestrian walkway. There's some things we need to do to it, but water is what? Water? We're, we're working on a lot of things, I think are gonna happen over there right now. Bicentennial Park, which is really well, there's a lot that's gonna happen. So, Prairie Creek Park. You know, not a lot for the basketball, baseball, softball field. Some groups use it. It's not used a lot. So that doesn't surprise me. But again, park trails 115, most used amenity at Prairie Creek Park survey says so. And then the close second looks like playgrounds. Again, people are saying, we're using the playgrounds a lot. Some of the comments at the end are, we want better playgrounds, accessible playground equipment. And the things of that nature.

Upkeep. That's the one I like to see too, you know, it's very top, heavy to good and excellent. So we like to see that there's only four people that said it was poor. Maybe they're disgruntled. I don't know. All right, I'm ready. And I said, if there any questions, feel free. One of the primary reasons that you use the Vigo County parks again, enjoying the outdoors and nature. 339 people. That's, that's like everybody we have turned in 394. Almost everybody wants to be outdoors and enjoy nature. That took the survey. Well, that's awesome. That was what we do. So that that lines up walking, hiking or bike biking, 300, 304. So it's real good to see that top ended. Playing sports. It's not really our niche, other than some races at Griffin Bike Park, but active recreation. City parks, they do a lot more recreation, YMCA leagues and things of that nature, we offer courses for people to come play and for free. That's more of our niche in things. Family activities is ranked pretty high, 169, then you can see from there, camping, birding, just meeting with friends and attending programs. So any questions on that part?

All right, if you seldom or do not use the parks, why? And the biggest reason was, I don't have enough time. 136 people, say I don't have enough time. I'm not real sure try to alleviate that yet. But, apparently the number one reason is they don't have time. So we can work on that. I'm not sure how we make more time

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for people, or maybe quicker, but most people just don't have the time, don't know what's available. We put out the magazine, we can, we, we can always improve on that. 72 says, too far away or not conveniently located, but we're hoping to improve that here shortly with some more expansion.

Heather Cosme Milian: On the other section, we let them write in an answer, and I went through all of them, and they all were, I use the parks. I should have included that as an option. So the other is, I use the parks. So I don't know how to answer this.

Adam Grossman: Well that's good to know. All right, I would like to see the add the following things. Of course, any master playing process, you wanna know, what things do you wanna see in the parks? And I'll have to ask Heather there in just second but more walking trails and paths 227 people, again, this is a pretty easy thing to start knocking off with Riley Spur coming, some additional trail we're building in Bicentennial Park. There's a lot coming with the connection all the way out to the Riley Spur. So, right now, our data supports the direction that we're moving on those things.

Community Member: Heather, I think mentioned at the riverSCAPE meeting about people wanting to see connections between parks. And to me that would be a great thing, you could go from Griffin Bike Park to Hawthorn or to Markle Mill. Clearly walking might be a longer term thing. But we should end up figuring out how to get a bike safely from most parts.

Heather Cosme Milian: The very last question on the survey is just an open ended let's hear it. What do you think? What do you wanna say? What do you wanna see? Any comments, anything like that. And the one we're seeing the most is they're wanting more trails. But they really specifically, especially are wanting to see trails that connect things, you know, to each other.

Community Member: If Rose is successful with their Lily Grant, there'll be a trail basically from Hawthorn to Demming, and there's a huge opportunity with Thompson Ditch. If we can get a trail along Thompson Ditch that gets you half way down to Griffin Bike Park. It would get you to Rea Park and it would get you to a lot of places so the inter connectivity of the city and county with not a whole lot of expanse. If you if you could get on to get the guys who run Thompson Ditch.

Heather Cosme Milian: Well, especially, I mean, for the bikers, that one is a safe place to bike. I mean, if you bike from Griffin Bike Park into downtown, it's not that very many miles, they would happily hop on that and bike that, or they would go from a Hawthorn to downtown, or all the way over, then to West Terre Haute, or just wherever. Because we, we kind of have that, I think, blessing, if you wanna call it, that, that we're close enough to where people would really, I think,



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use the trails to bike places or to get good runs in or walks in and, and things like that.

Community Member: It would be great to see as an outcome goal interconnectivity by biking and pedestrian paths to all of the parks. Even the city parks, maybe you can't make it in five years but you can make it some part.

Adam Grossman: Okay, thank you. Saw the park. I think the more programs and activities is twofold. I think people want more things outside, but some of it, they may not know what we have. For some reason we have movie in the park, and we just don't have the attendance, you know, people. That's one thing that was on the survey. We want movies in the park. We advertise on high 99, WTHI, the website on Facebook, and we get 10 or 20 people and it cost, what, 1500 bucks for movies. One thing that's hit in the survey.

Heather Cosme Milian: Like this last movie we did, we did it in partnership with the parents club at Sugar Creek Consolidated. And every single kid went home with a flyer about the movie. And then they also sent home flyers to other schools too, up on the north side of town. And only about 15 families came.

Community Member: What time did it start?

Heather Cosme Milian: Since they're outside, they can't start until after dark, so it didn't start till nine.

Community Member: I mean, that's probably a lot of the problem. If you, if you had them in the spring and in the fall, maybe.

Heather Cosme Milian: This one was in, in May.

Community Member: Western end of the time zone. I mean, we were just on, on the East Coast. You know, it makes, makes good more, maybe more than an hour's difference between sunrise and sunset, between here and New York, just because of the time zone.

Adam Grossman: We had fall movies, and those were about the same. I'll say, if we didn't try it again, maybe it wouldn't be better.

Community Member: Maybe if it started seven.

Adam Grossman: We had, a matter of fact, we had our haunted village, whatever and a movie after you couldn't beg anybody to stay after for a movie. But, you know, we'll keep plugging away, do you remember what most of the others were on the what do you want to add to our County Parks?

Heather Cosme Milian: Not off the top of my head.

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Adam Grossman: Stay tuned, we'll figure that out later. All right, then I'm ready. What additional recreational programs do you feel should be added? And again, outdoor environmental programs is a 187 hits on that. Fitness classes, aerobics, yoga at 118. Again, special events, movies, festivals and concerts at 227, we've had what we used to have, how many movies are six, six movie and parks throughout, starting in the spring, run to fall. And we probably average 15 people.

Rich Moore: Well, how many came to our shows that we did two, two concerts last year at the Bike Park. And the only people that came were people that were with the band, and it was free. It was free, so no one came.

Adam Grossman: It was free. I don't know where the disconnect is on some of the surveyors over and how we're not getting to them, or how we're not offering what they want. I'm not real sure if you got 227 survey results, wantin the movies and concerts and we had them. When you can't get them to show up, where are they?

Community Member: We've got a problem, I think the whole community in that there's no one place you can go to find out, what's going on in Terre Haute.

Rich Moore: There's too many, there's too many avenues to get your information, and it's getting missed.

Adam Grossman: We started that with the Invisionary Media guy, I can't remember his name, Mark Gibson started a community calendar that everybody was supposed to get. That was five or six, seven years ago.

Community Member: There's Haute Happenings to somebody had that going, and it was good.

Heather Cosme Milian: It's still, it's still really, really strong.

Adam Grossman: So I don't, I agree. I think one place everybody knew they could click and find out what's going on in the next two or three days.

Community member: Even well, a place not only, but not only can the users use it easily, but you gotta have the people who are putting on the events being able to post their events easily. If, if it's difficult, they won't, you can.

Rich Moore: You don't have time to do it.

Heather Cosme Milian: It takes me a lot of time to I send our schedule to Channel Ten, Channel Two, the newspaper, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Haute Happenings. We do Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, our website. I we shout it to the wind practically. We have bulletin boards up in all of our parks that I go



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out almost every other week, and I'm constantly updating, and I don't, and I don't know.

Adam Grossman: I think the next slide shows up pretty well too. There we go. And so all these people, 304 of them all say social media, Facebook, twitter, instagram, or television, or the website.

Heather Cosme Milian: But then one of the biggest complaints we get is, well, why don't you advertise more? Why don't you post these things more? We don't find out about them until after they happen, or I don't see it on Facebook until after it's happened. And I we, I, we post twice a day every day, if not more.

Adam Grossman: I could see trying to invest in somebody that's gonna do that calendar would alleviate the rest of these pie chart items, other than our Facebook and our website. I'm not sure who's best for that, or Mark was trying to take off with it. It must have fell through. I've not heard nothing.

Community Member: It's probably a hard way to make a living.

Adam Grossman: But it's gotta be, I don't know if it's like a Thrive type organization, or if it's it, who runs Haute Happenings?

Heather Cosme Milian: It's a mom. It's a mom that that started it.

Community Member: Rachel, her maiden name was Bush. I don't know if she started to but that's right, trying to find stuff for.

Adam Grossman: If everyone rallies around that person, and we bolster that. I don't, you know, somebody's gotta take the lead on that so we can get things out more easily. We've got plenty going on. People say, I don't know what's going on. There's nothing going on. So that's, I think, that could alleviate 90 % of what's on the board now. I'm ready for the next last or last, but the last one. There we go. So comments, suggestion highlights, which I wanna hear you guys's feedback as well. Continue to improve the existing facilities, additional trails. How do we build out by Bicentennial Park in the next five years? New ammenities, playgrounds and outdoor classrooms, pool, which is not gonna happened in the county parks. Pickle ball court, Prairie Creek's gettin a pickle ball court so we can knock that one off the list. That's right now, if I can ever pin them down to the date to come do it. Pickle ball court, new playground equipment, pave pump track at Griffin. We're gonna knock that off the list here, this year or next. So at least we're, we're knocking off the list as we go. Better playgrounds, safe playgrounds, or walking rails, keeping up with Griffin. And then what West Terre Haute wants a splash pad. They're gonna alleviate that themselves, I believe.

Community Member: Are they still trying to start their own parks department.

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Adam Grossman: They have their own parks department, and as of, I think I finished the paperwork. But as of last board meeting they now own South 7<sup>th</sup> Street Park. So South 7<sup>th</sup> Street Park is now West Terre Haute. Technically Waterworks I think owns it but they have a parks board. So we're at this point when we're referring to West Terre Haute, we're referring to Bicentennial Park more Lee Fields kind of on both sides of West Terre Haute. But we, we don't currently run anything in West Terre Haute. And there was a couple of comments about accessible playground equipment as well, and we've had that comment a few times, especially at Prairie Creek Park. So we've got two playgrounds that will probably be due for renovation during the next couple of years, ones that Brentlinger Shelter at Fowler. It'll probably be a younger kids playground. That was one of the comments. You need more playgrounds for three to five year olds, so that would be a good one for younger kids. And then another playground after that with more accessible equipment and replacing some of our existing equipment, of course, with more accessible equipment. We also went to a lot of these basket swings. I'm not real sure if people really know how to use them, and maybe we should put something on how to use them. Arc of Vigo County loves to come to Fowler Park because, because they've got, we got this big basket swing and some other stuff, and they love swinging, swinging people on it. And, and they counted as accessible, you can lay in the basket, and people swing, they swing way up in the air. And they just love using that.

Rich Moore: It's all fun and games until one falls out, take our word for it.

Adam Grossman: So after seeing all that, what we can backtrack through any of the slides you want. But we just wanna make sure do you think the survey data is trending the direction that you think, or do you think it ought to trend in a different direction? Or is there something that is not hitting that you think needs to hit?

Community Member: You know, I-I don't think we can say too much about trying to make sure that we've made huge progress on Bicentennial in the next five years on terms of. You know we're getting them off 40 into the park is tough stuff right now, getting them to go back to the trail and to.

Adam Grossman: A lot of land acquisition that's gonna help that and maintain that all actually.

Community Member: Getting the veterans, Amvets closed down, it'll be nice to increase the beauty along there. You know getting trees along 40 on both sides of the road from the bridge to there.

Adam Grossman: That's our lot so a lot of that stuff happening in the next year if we can ever get permitting done. West Terre Haute wants to start their own Little League football there next to Amvets. They're practicing every I think Tuesday

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and Thursday, up here now, until they can get one installed. And they want a nice, you know, nice field out, regulation, goal post, benches and lighting.

Community Member: Lighting too?

Adam Grossman: They, they want the whole, the whole deal that they're, they're gonna figure out how to pay for it, you know. But they're also gonna run it, mow it and maintain it. If we can ever get to a lease agreement.

Community Member: I think tryin to get water to the butterfly garden if we really want that to do well, it's gonna need water.

Adam Grossman: Yeah there's some things we're working on that will alleviate a bunch of those issues in the next couple of years.

Community Member: I guess that includes the second butterfly garden or whatever at Dewey Point.

Adam Grossman: Well we've got the money now to do that, that's happening this fall.

Community Member: You know getting to get some water to that center piece.

Adam Grossman: Yeah, we've got a hydrant next to the shelter.

Community Member: I know. But you gotta get it across the pavement.

Adam Grossman: What kind of, what are you talking about? Water and water? Or drinking water?

Community Member: Watering water.

Adam Grossman: Okay, well, let's just have string hoses from there, though. I won't bore underneath the road for water, I doubt. But, it's not too far maybe 100 feet, maybe. Something of that nature, not too far. Emily's Walk gave us money to do a raised planter bed that's suppose to be in the shape of a butterfly and then do plugs, I'd rather do established plants than plugs installed.

Community Member: It's too bad you can't put some sprinkler heads in there, because a raised bed over there is gonna be dry as a whole.

Adam Grossman: Yeah, Jeremy used the right dirt in the raised butterfly garden on the other side and when we come and wondered a couple times but it didn't take too long before those natives took off. We've had to go a couple times and weed it two, three or four times but it actually doesn't look bad right now. We got some trees that need cut out of it and it's got some things that need pulled but it

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looks pretty good. It was pretty dry when we right after we planted it. But yeah that's comin we're gonna get the raised planter bed there in the middle at Dewey Point we're gonna get QR codes linked up with videos and things, so the people on the walkway can scan the code and see a drone shot of the wetlands or a Doctor at ISU talking about ecology and what they see out there, and just different things for people to do. So hopefully, by we'll say, late fall. Well, we've kind of not had time to work on that yet, but it's coming.

Community Member: So, Adam, are they using the amvets building these days?

Adam Grossman: They're still doing bingo once or twice a week, I think. And, but they are using it to speak of, yes.

Community Member: Yes, it, since this is for the record, you know, my opinion, my feelings, but, you know, gotta go on the record, Bicentennial Park has got such a special position to be accessible by the urban core of Terre Haute, and how it works with the city of Terre Haute's, Fairbanks Park, you know, Fairbanks Park, for the city park, have active recreation and so on. Bicentennial Park, balancing that out with trails and passive recreation as our river front develops is going to be such a key part of it I think to make our community special. Most river communities, West Lafayette or something, Lafayette it's urban on both sides. Which is fantastic but what's going to be different for ours is what's Bicentennial Park is for us to have a vibrant river front. It's gonna really take that Bicentennial park being special.

Adam Grossman: I'm excited for the next two years over there, it's gonna be coming along. What else? He's been quiet. You got until Sunday to take the survey and tell us. After Sunday, I sure. I tell us.

Rich Moore: So we discovered something kind of cool about the shop over there.

Community Member: I seeing people access school to the river. I'd love to see more kayak entries into it. I know that I've talked to some of the college kids. They want to come into the park but they're lacking something and I don't know what it is. I have thought maybe of having available, they have these concrete portable things. Get some but the kids and the adults getting them close to the river. I hope to see one side or another steps down to the river to get down there.

Community Member: Adam is that lake over in West Terre Haute, kind of south of the school district offices over there, that's county right? Trying to figure out how to get that better there. You can kayak out of that 12 months out of the year. Unfortunately there's probably no way we're ever going to stabilize water levels over there in Wabashiki.

Adam Grossman: No, it fluctuates wildly.

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Community Member: And nobody's gonna let us put a gate up to hold water back so you're never gonna be able to kayak there more than a couple months out of the year probably.

Adam Grossman: Our trails held out better than I thought it would. Have you ridden it lately?

Rich Moore: Not lately

Adam Grossman: And it help up better than I thought it would when we built that.

Rich Moore: April.

Community Member: People right there to kayak and make that look nicer around that little gravel pit.

Community Member: I think classes for people to learn really how to and if they're going on the river, important factors to know. Like how to control a motor in front is really nice.

Adam Grossman: What else? Is everything else on track, trails and playgrounds, outdoor programming. That's like the top four off the top of my head. Trails.

Community Member: It was mentioned probably earlier but coordination between city and county parks.

Adam Grossman: That's happening more now. We have Kilie, before I left, it's been two or three weeks ago now, I guess. And we had long, long conversation.

Community Member: I think that that's a great thing.

Community Member: I love seeing the incorporation of nature into recreation. In other words instead of getting the metal and all that maybe there's someplace there's safely stones they can climb up and climb down or wooden you know just trying to make it different.

Adam Grossman: We've looked at natural playscape and that's something that would be nice at Bicentennial Park when it get it more flushed out. Something we've looked at doing. Especially up front by the parking area, we talked about doing it, it was in the LWCF Grant for shelter area but we transferred more money into land acquisition. We're trying to hammer out a shelter, I don't know if we'll have enough left for a natural playscape.

Community Member: You could probably find a plethora of these right now. Just a log down here. They want us to.

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Adam Grossman: Yeah, we gotta be a little bit careful in what we call it. Issues with fall hazards and you gotta have mulch and what you label it as kind of thing, we don't want sued either. Compin made some nice natural, well we call it natural playscape. Just designed for play but you have to have mulch underneath it and that sort of nature.

Community Member: I was just in Denver, and they, they have this whole area in one of the parks is part of the playground, where it's just sand. And all these little kids will bring their trucks with them to the park to just sit there. They just play for hours. They put a little table and chairs out of a tree from a tree, you know, in there. And it's really cute.

Heather Cosme Milian: My son's in that stage right now.

Community Member: That that wouldn't cost much. You know?

Heather Cosme Milian: The first thing he does when he gets to the parks is run for the dirt and the mulch, and he starts digging.

Community Member: You could give it to them, just give them the sand,

Adam Grossman: We're still in that stage, just bigger toys. Anything else. You've been quiet.

Community Member: I'm just listening to you know.

Adam Grossman: Well, I'm happy to see playgrounds, being outside, outdoor rec and trails, biking and hiking. And I can, we can tackle those four, that's the main for the people are yelling for, we can, we can do that. So, happy. Happy to see those results so far. So in the next few months, after storm clean up and after our banquet Saturday and things of that nature, we're gonna start meeting and hammering now the data, trying to get the other data classified, get it into percentages, and make another priority action plan like that. Like I said that was the most useful thing people doing a master plan is because they have to and it goes on the shelf. And if you just read a 200 page document, it means nothing to anybody. But if all your survey results are boiled down to, what can we do in each park, and this is what the survey said. And if this is what we want to accomplish, and how are you gonna fund it, that's a whole lot more useful than just writing a book. So that's what we hope to have by October.

Community Member: And on your on your side of the river you're down low am I correct? And that's a great place to fish.

Adam Grossman: Well, in some places.

Community Member: And that riverbank is dangerous

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Adam Grossman: Once you get to bankfull level it's out of my hands at that point, getting down there I mean the best place and easiest place that I can think of is at the gate there by the Wabashiki Trail at the trailhead. You can get through the woods there but if you get very far and the river is high it'll go under anything you put out there. But you can get that far without too many floods I mean we hit it a month ago when the river was back up and that's the easier place I can think of and that's Armycore and permitting to get it done. Anything else? This is a small group, quickest meeting we've had yet. That's all I've got, if that's all you got. All right, sounds good. Thank you.

***Staff Survey***

An early step of the Master Plan process included an employee survey and meeting. We discussed the previous survey along with the new one and the planning process. The meeting was attended by 6 full-time maintenance employees, 5 part-time year-round employees, 1 office manager, 2 programming/park management staff, and Superintendent. Before the meeting, the employees were also given an employee survey to complete anonymously and turn in before the meeting started.

**Vigo County Parks and Recreation Master Planning Staff Meeting:**

Date: Thursday March 14, 2024  
Location: Fowler Park Log Barn  
3000 E Oregon Church Rd  
Terre Haute, IN 47802  
Time: 1:00 p.m.

**Agenda:**

1. Community meeting Dates
2. Master Planning Process and course of action
3. The past 5 years and success
4. Offer to send a draft to each park for input



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**Employee Survey**

1. How happy are you with your role and responsibilities at VCPRD? Why or why not?
2. Do you have the tools/equipment and resources you need to perform your job well? Why or why not?
3. Do you feel the leadership team clearly communicates organizational wins, struggles, goals, and strategies? Why or why not?
4. Does the organization allow you to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance? Why or why not?
5. Please explain, in detail, how you would improve the current culture of your individual park:
6. How would you improve the user experience at the parks?
7. Would you describe the pay currently as low, average, or above average?
8. How happy are you with general work conditions?

**Employee Survey Results**

1. Unanimously answered that the employees were happy with their role and responsibilities with the VCPRD.
2. All answered they had or mostly had the tools/ equipment and resources they needed to perform their job well.
3. Half of employees answered that they felt leadership team did or mostly did communicate, while the other half answered that they felt the leadership team did not.
4. All answered they do feel the VCPRD allows them to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance.
5. The employees answered they wished to see more trails that were user friendly, leadership listened, things should stay the same, leadership should make 1 employee in charge of a park and that employees should stay on 1 project at a time.
6. Employees wished the VCPRD removed patrons that broke rules, we simplified registration for camping, created more activities, improved signage and mulch, continued maintaining parks, added more lighting and kept the park clean.



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7. Half of the employees answered they felt the pay was low, half answered they felt it was average and one felt it was above average.

8. 80% of the employees felt they were happy with their general work conditions and 20% felt they were adequate.