

**2016**  
**State of the County**  
**St. Joseph County Parks**



**County Parks Board**

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 Donna Pfeil, Vice President  
 Virginia Calvin, Secretary  
 John Ferrettie John Gleissner  
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 Mark Telloyan

**Park Foundation Officers**

David Deahl, President  
 Matt Kahn, Vice-President  
 Andrew Szczechowski, Treasurer  
 Marge Riemenschneider, Secretary



In honor of St. Joseph County Parks' 50th Anniversary, Councilman Telloyan and Parks Board Vice Pres. Donna Pfeil raise a US flag that flew over the US Capitol in April. The event included an Indiana Bicentennial Flag raising as well.

**OUR MISSION**

The St. Joseph County Parks Department enriches the community and the lives of St. Joseph County residents. We **▲** Conserve significant natural areas, **▲** Promote stewardship of our natural and cultural heritage through programs and services, **▲** and Enhance visitor experiences through well-maintained park facilities.

Proud to be...  
 VISIT **SOUTH BEND**  
 MISHAWAKA 2016  
 INDUSTRY PARTNER OF THE YEAR



Bendix Woods County Park received a face lift with the paving of the roads and lots.



St. Patrick's County Park hosted the area's first Orienteering Meet with Cincinnati Orienteering Club.



A half-mile of the LaSalle Trail, from Cleveland to Darden Roads was completed.



"A Place to Be Somebody" celebrated the life of Elkhart playwright Charles Gordone at the Fischgrund Amphitheater.



The Indiana Bicentennial Torch Relay concluded its St. Joseph County leg in Bendix Woods County Park at the Bicentennial Birthday Bash.

**Overview**

The County Parks provide benefits to community public health and economic development by managing over **1,300** acres of greenspace, river and stream corridors, wetlands and woods, and by providing space for walking, biking, canoeing, paddling, skiing and learning.

Visitation at the County Parks and offsite events exceeded **323,700**.

The Parks Department manages: Bendix Woods, St. Patrick's and Ferrettie-Baugo Creek County Parks, Spicer Lake Nature Preserve, and assists with the management of Chamberlain Lake Nature Preserve, Jasinski Canoe Launch and Beverly D. Crone Restoration Area.

**By the Numbers**

The County Parks coordinated **20** special events and hosted or partnered in **24** community events. Roughly **50** partners assisted the County Parks in providing programs and services. Volunteers contributed **3,362** hours for park programs and projects, an all time high. **17,174** school children and individuals participated in hands-on Interpretive programs on local cultural and natural history, with attendance and revenue up 35% and 18% respectively. Thanks to new partnerships for special events, **34,000** people participated in Leisure Services workshops and programs, up 24% from last year. Over **200** radio/TV appearances and newspaper articles were generated by and about St. Joseph County Parks. Picnic and shelter rentals increased by nearly 6% (**419 total**) supporting park operations.

**Other Highlights**

- ▲ St. Joseph County Parks celebrated "50 Years of Outdoor Fun!" Activities and events included **50** free or discounted programs such as "Good, Clean, Dirty Fun" and a system-wide geocaching event.
- Burkhart donated **8** billboards celebrating the Parks and the *South Bend Tribune* ran **3** feature stories on County Park history.
- ▲ Sugar Camp Days in March hosted **3,000** visitors at Bendix Woods Co. Park. **30%** of the visitors were from outside of St. Joseph County.
- ▲ St. Joseph County Parks received **3** awards in 2016: the inaugural Clark Ketcham Conservation Award for efforts in invasive species removal, habitat restoration, and stewardship education; and an Award of Excellence for Innovative Programming for Family Passport to Play, a collaborative program with South Bend VPA, Martin's Supermarkets, HealthWorks! and the County Health Dept.
- ▲ Visit South Bend Mishawaka named St. Joseph County Parks as "Industry Partner of the Year."
- ▲ We hosted several new events including an orienteering meet and **2** disc golf tournaments: Michiana Meltdown and Thanksgiving weekend doubles.
- ▲ At the Fischgrund Amphitheater we partnered with South Bend Civic Theatre to host **3,000** attendees for performances of *Mary Poppins*, *REO Speedwagon* and *A Place to Be Somebody*, a Bicentennial Legacy project with IU South Bend, also graced the stage.
- ▲ A **1/2-mile** of the LaSalle Trail was completed between Cleveland and Darden Roads, including the installation of a HAWK Crossing - with support from the Dept. of Public Works.
- ▲ Over **3** miles of roads and parking areas at Bendix Woods County Park were milled, paved and slurry-sealed, providing a major face lift for that facility, contributing to renewed visitation interest in that park.
- ▲ We played an integral part in the County's efforts to celebrate Indiana's Bicentennial, coordinating **3** Legacy projects, assisting with the Torch Relay and hosting the Bicentennial Birthday Bash (at Bendix Woods), which doubled as a celebration for St. Joseph County Parks' anniversary. Over **2,500** people attended that event.

**Helping Under-served Youth, Adults and Schools**

Schools and organizations serving under-resourced children participated in **49** interpretive programs -- many at reduced costs, with support from the Donna Pfeil Interpretive Program Scholarship Fund and the School Bus Transportation Fund supported by donors and the Friends of Bendix Woods and Spicer Lake. Non-profit organizations, including Center for the Homeless, Healthwin, LaCasa De Amistad, St. Margaret's House, and Boys and Girls Club also received discounted leisure services programming.