

2015
State of the County
St. Joseph County Parks



County Park Board

Larry Catanzarite, President
 Donna Pfeil, Vice President
 Virginia Calvin, Secretary
 John Ferrettie
 John Gleissner
 Thomas Panzica
 Phil Sutton

2015 County Commissioners

Andrew Kostielney, President
 Dave Thomas,
 Deb Fleming, DDS

2015 County Council

Rafael Morton, President
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 Dianna Hess
 Robert Kruszynski, Jr.
 Robert J. McCahill
 Corey D. Noland
 James O'Brien
 Mark Root
 Dan Herbster/Mark Telloyan

Park Foundation Officers

Dave Fischgrund, President
 David Deahl, Vice-Pres
 Michelle Kite, Treasurer
 Marge Riemenschneider, Secretary



The **Economic Impact** of St. Joseph County Parks is **\$2,762,000** according to a study by John Peck, Ph.D and Quantech Research Assoc.

OUR MISSION

The St. Joseph County Parks Department enriches the community and the lives of St. Joseph County residents. We ▲ Conserve and care for significant natural areas.

▲ Promote understanding and stewardship of our unique natural and cultural heritage through innovative programs and services. ▲ Enhance visitor experiences through well-maintained park facilities.



Top to bottom: Crowds at Sugar Camp Days; Kids at "Night Out"; Volunteers planting saplings at the Studebaker Tree Sign; Fiddler on the Roof; Bald Eagle at St. Patrick's County Park; New utility vehicle; Parks board and Parks Foundation board with Evie Kirkwood at South Bend Hall of Fame dinner

Overview

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

Visitation at the County Parks reached **313,000**.

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. Volunteers contributed **2,986** hours for park programs and projects. **17,174** school children and individuals participated in hands-on Interpretive programs to learn about 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 numbered **395** with an 11% increase in gross revenue to support operations.

Other Highlights

- ▲ Thanks to ideal weather, and great media coverage aided by a grant from the Hotel-Motel Tax fund, Sugar Camp Days in March hosted a record 3,200 visitors at Bendix Woods Co. Park.
- ▲ A bald eagle pair established a nest within the park and fledged one young. It, along with a similar nest this year at Potato Creek State Park is the first successful bald eagle nest in St. Joseph County in approx. 80 years.
- ▲ In partnership with ND-LEEF we hosted 18 national journalists from around the Midwest for a conference on Climate Change media coverage.
- ▲ The St. Joseph County Parks Foundation raised over \$86,000 during Give Local SJC for the County Parks' endowment fund within the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County.
- ▲ In August, we hosted "Night Out" in partnership with the St. Joseph County Sheriff Dept. for over 1,500 people at St. Patrick's Co Park.
- ▲ We launched a new partnership with South Bend Civic Theater to host a summer musical at the Fishgrund Amphitheater at St. Patrick's Co. Park. During the four nights, over 4,000 attendees enjoyed performances of *Fiddler on the Roof*.
- ▲ Over 2,500 evergreen saplings were planted by staff and volunteers at Bendix Woods County Park for the restoration of the Studebaker Tree Sign, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ▲ With funding from the Cum Cap. Fund we replaced 4 utility vehicles with new Bobcats.
- ▲ Key construction and maintenance projects included repairs to failed electrical and water lines, installation of a dry well, roof repairs, storage building remodeling, installation of baby-changing stations, and trail bridge work.
- ▲ Evie Kirkwood, Director, Received the Ideal Baldoni Award for Outstanding Public Service from the South Bend Hall of Fame.

Helping Under-served Youth, Adults and Schools

Title I 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 our School Bus Transportation Grant 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 and Boys and Girls Club also received discounted leisure services programming.