

2018

State of the County Report



2018 County Parks Board
 Larry Catanzarite, President
 Donna Pfeil, Vice President
 Virginia Calvin, Secretary
 John Ferrettie // John Gleissner
 Jacob Holloway* // Rick Kennedy*
 Thomas Panzica

2018 County Commissioners
 Andrew Kostielney, President
 Deb Fleming, Vice President
 Dave Thomas, Member

2018 County Council
 Rafael Morton, President
 Mark A. Catanzarite // Diana Hess
 Robert Kruszynski, Jr. // Robert McCahill
 Corey D. Noland // James O'Brien*
 Richard Pfeil* // Mark Root
 Mark Telloyan
 * partial terms

2018 Parks Foundation Officers
 John Yarger, President
 Kyle Copelin, Vice-President
 Pete Owsianowski, Secretary
 Andrew Sczcechowski, Treasurer

The St. Joseph County Parks
 Bendix Woods County Park
 Ferrettie-Baugo Creek County Park
 St. Patrick's County Park
 Spicer Lake Nature Preserve

Partnered sites:
 Chamberlain Lake Nature Preserve
 Jasinski Canoe Launch
 Beverly D. Crone Restoration Area

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



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

What We Do...

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 gatherings, walking, biking, canoeing, paddling, skiing and learning.

2018 visitation at the County Parks and offsite events reached **313,000** users.

We Are Proud of these 2018 Highlights!

▲ The final phase of the LaSalle Trail was completed between Auten and State Line Roads. A safety crossing was installed at State Line Road jointly funded by the St. Joseph County Parks Foundation, St. Joseph County Parks and Niles Township. Over 18,000 cyclists used the trail in 2018. (1)

▲ The County Parks launched its Five Year Master Plan process engaging over 1000 people in an online survey, public meetings and events to gather input on goals and action items for 2019-2023. (2)

▲ A new partnership with St. Joseph County Public Library launched StoryWalks^(R) - children's nature picture books displayed on a trail encouraging literacy and outdoor family activity. The StoryWalks were funded by NIPSCO and area donors. A free park gate pass check out program was also established at the library. (3)

▲ Spicer Lake Nature Preserve was named a Wetland of National Distinction by the Society of Wetland Scientists. The site was recognized for its high quality habitat, plant life and visitor access. (4)

▲ The 1927 windmill at St. Patrick's County Park was refurbished, funded by a grant by local and state Questers groups. The windmill originally pumped water for livestock when The Sisters of the Holy Cross operated St. Patrick's Farm. (5)

▲ The National Orienteering Championship-Middle Distance was held at St. Patrick's County Park and a seasonal orienteering course was installed as a new program amenity. (6)

▲ Through the County's Energy Performance Contract the failed well at St. Patrick's County Park and the aged boiler at Bendix Woods County Park were replaced. Other energy-savings upgrades included LED lighting in many buildings. (7)

▲ Thanks to a gift from the Pfeil Pfamily Pfund and the St. Joseph County Parks Foundation, new disc golf baskets were installed at Ferrettie-Baugo Creek County Park. The course hosted two tournaments this year. (8)

▲ With support from local donors, the interpretive team expanded *Tales to Trails* to three urban schools at no cost to the schools. The literacy-environmental ed program for 1st-graders provides multiple lessons to re-enforce science principles and build appreciation for local natural resources.

▲ The St. Joseph County Parks Foundation awarded 2018 Oak Tree Awards to I/N Tek I/N Kote and Sherry and Bob Harke for their contributions to the County Parks.

Here's Some Happy Numbers...

168 educational programs for schools were provided by our Interpretive Services team. **17** schools received funding support through the Donna Pfeil Scholarship Fund to participate in those programs. Attendance and revenue for our Leisure Services programs increased by over **9%**. We provided free or reduced cost programming to **21** community social service organizations serving children and older adults, including El Campito, Logan Center, St. Margaret's House, and Healthwin. Volunteers aided the County Parks by contributing **2,502** hours towards programs and projects. Researchers conducted **10** scientific studies within the parks on lichens, amphibians, nanoparticles, microrhyzal fungi, and more.