



# CASS COUNTY

## *Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan*

*2006 - 2011*

*Southwest Michigan Planning Commission*

*October 2006*



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**This plan was prepared for Cass County through joint effort with**

**Southwest Michigan Planning Commission**

*Shelley Klug, Associate Planner*

**185 East Main Street, Suite 701**

**Benton Harbor, MI 49022**

**November 2006**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The 2006 - 2011 Cass County Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan* contains goals and an action plan created to provide a high-quality green infrastructure of parks, trails, and facilities for all recreational participants. The plan was developed with careful consideration and seeks to meet the needs and desires of every park visitor from those who wish to enjoy the peace and quiet of an undisturbed forest to those seeking to improve their health and physical condition.

This important planning process was initiated by Cass County Administrators and the Cass County Parks Department. Citizens willing and capable of participating in thoughtful, knowledgeable, and meaningful discussions were selected to serve as a steering committee. Their collective contribution involved research, patience, and many hours of hard work. Throughout discussions of various priorities, the diverse perspectives expressed by committee members were never far away from the common belief that the Cass County Parks are an important and vital element necessary to achieving a high quality of life in the county.

To each committee member: *Thank you for your valuable wisdom and willingness to share.*

### **Members of the 2006 Recreation Plan Steering Committee**

Kaye Steiding	Amy Druskovich
Don Coy	Dallas Chester
Bill Westrate	Barb Cook
Johnie Rodebush	Annie File
Dick Buerkle	Patty Carlisle
Shirley Hartley	

Residents of the county with the greatest sense of park ownership and appreciation can be thankful to have the leadership and commitment to park excellence as demonstrated by the Parks Director. Being ready to answer any question and willing to go the extra mile to provide information and guidance, the director was invaluable to the planning process. On behalf of those who enjoy the parks now, and for those who will in the future, a very special thank you to ***Scott Wyman***.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*At times, those living in areas blessed with an abundance of natural beauty* may overlook, or take for granted, the pleasure of playing in a water wonderland, walking for miles through forest trails or stopping for a moment to hear – nothing. In Cass County, Michigan however, these gifts *are* noticed and cherished.

As this *Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plan* was being developed, it became clear that preserving and protecting the county's land and water resources from pollution or overuse was of utmost importance. With that understanding, residents also expressed a desire for the development of recreational facilities and opportunities that combine responsible use and enjoyment of these resources.

In addition to local consumers with an appreciation of the county's offerings, visitors are welcome and encouraged to come again and again. Regional cooperative efforts are being sought to widen the scope and types of trail networks to invite cross-county and cross-state tourism for year-round enjoyment. Careful consideration has been given to meeting the various needs of all who wish to enjoy recreational and leisurely pursuits. Understanding and acknowledging all members of the population is important to this goal. Among other points, the plan makes note of those with disabilities, changes in age distribution, and other socio-economic factors.

The goals created for this five-year plan to develop the parks, open spaces, blueways, and greenways to maximize recreational opportunities, is evidence of Cass County's commitment to be responsible stewards of the natural bounty found within its borders.

*(Please see Goal Summary on following page)*

## Goal Summary

- GOAL 1 Establish stable and secure funding to improve and maintain county parks and recreation programs.*
- GOAL 2 Create and implement a marketing campaign to promote Cass County as a recreation destination for residents and visitors.*
- GOAL 3 Provide barrier-free accessibility to existing and future facilities.*
- GOAL 4 Develop and support policies that will preserve and protect valuable water and land resources.*
- GOAL 5 Support and promote policies that will preserve and protect properties with historic and/or cultural value.*
- GOAL 6 Seek and establish connections between existing and future trails and pathways including greenways and blueways.*
- GOAL 7 Respond to changing demographics when planning future recreational facilities and programs.*
- GOAL 8 Enhance the positive working relationship with all units of government within Cass County, including the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, to maximize the benefits of countywide amenities.*
- GOAL 9 Develop a project plan in response to the identified needs of Cass County residents.*

## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

*Cass County roadways curve gently through miles of rolling farmland* framed with thick woods and evergreen forests punctuated by lakes and rivers at nearly every turn. The county is known for its unspoiled natural resources including a large number of rivers, lakes, and creeks such as the Dowagiac River, Diamond Lake, Magician Lake, Silver Creek, and many others. There are also several nature preserves and prairies, including Fred Russ Forest, one of the few permanently preserved virgin forests in Michigan.<sup>1</sup>



Throughout every season of the year, Cass County's beautiful rural lands, open spaces, and abundant waterways provide a variety of opportunities for delightful recreation and leisurely pursuits.

### Historic Overview

The southwest Michigan area now known as Cass County was originally inhabited by three bands of Potawatomi Indians. The Weesaw band had their winter camp in Newton's Woods, the Shavehead band camped about three miles east of Shavehead Lake in Porter Township, and the Pokagon band had a summer camp and cornfield on the Pokagon prairie in Pokagon Township.<sup>2</sup>

Since the early 1800s, Cass County has developed a rich agricultural history, which has continued into the present. (Cass County is currently the leading pork producing county in Michigan and is one of the nation's leading strawberry producers.)

Officially organized in 1829, the county was named for the former governor of the Michigan territory, Lewis Cass. The small town of Geneva in Penn Township was the first county governmental seat. In 1834, the village of Cassopolis became the second and current county seat.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.remcl1.k12.mi.us/lcisd/cass\\_co.htm](http://www.remcl1.k12.mi.us/lcisd/cass_co.htm) (Information obtained from Cass County Directory, 1998 issue, compiled and arranged by Ann L. Simmons, Clerk/Register)

<sup>2</sup> From Wikipedia Cass County, Michigan



The completion of the Michigan Railroad through the county in 1848 was instrumental to the county's growth as demonstrated by a surge in population which nearly doubled between 1840 and 1850. The following timeline demonstrates the growth of the county's population from its official organization in 1869 to the present.

Among other milestones and entrepreneurs of note, Dr. T. K. Lawless, Fred Russ, and Edward Lowe are mentioned in the timeline as they were instrumental to the development of the county parks through the sale and/or generous donations of land.

### Timeline of historic events and population growth

<i>Population growth by decade</i>		<i>Timeline of Historic Events in Cass County<sup>3</sup></i>	
1830	919	1829 ➤	Cass County officially organized
		1834 ➤	Cassopolis designated as county seat
1840	5,710	1848 ➤	Michigan Central Railroad comes through county
1850	10,907	1854 ➤	P.D. Beckwith opens foundry
1860	17,721	1861-1865 ➤	Underground Railroad active in Cass County
1870	21,094	1870s ➤	James Heddon revolutionizes beekeeping industry and wooden fishing lures
1880	22,009	1886 ➤	Round Oak Stove Company founded
1890	20,953		
1900	20,876	1908-1909 ➤	Dowagiac Motor Car Company opens and closes
1910	20,624	1919 ➤	T.K. Lawless receives MD degree at Northwestern – teaches dermatology 1924-1941
1920	20,395		
1930	20,888	1939 ➤	Fred Russ gives 580 acres of woods to MSC
1940	21,910	1947 ➤	Edward Lowe invents “kitty litter”
1950	28,185		
1960	36,932		
1970	43,312	1974 ➤	Cass County Parks & Recreation Board established
1980	49,499	1980 ➤	State of Michigan deeds 602 acres to the county to become T.K. Lawless Park
		1989 ➤	“Friends of the Parks” is formed
1990	49,477	1992 ➤	Tornado touches down near Dowagiac
		1995 ➤	Property added to T.K. Lawless Park –now totals 862 acres
2000	51,104	2006 ➤	Cass County adopts five-year development plan for the parks

<sup>3</sup> <http://lafourche.com/lawless.htm>

## **Physical Characteristics**

### **Location**

Cass County is located in southwestern Michigan bordered by Berrien County to the west, Van Buren County to the north, St. Joseph County to the east, and the State of Indiana to the south. This rural county is approximately two hours east of Chicago, three hours west of Detroit, and three hours north of Indianapolis.

Within the 508 square miles of the county, there are fifteen townships, four incorporated villages, and one city. (See Map on next page)

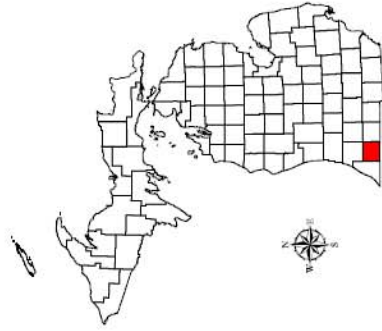
The total area of the county includes 16.3 square miles of water (equivalent to 3.2 percent) and 492.2 square miles of land.<sup>4</sup> Over half of the 492 square miles of land is active farmland.



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<sup>4</sup> *U.S. Census Bureau*

# Cass County, Michigan



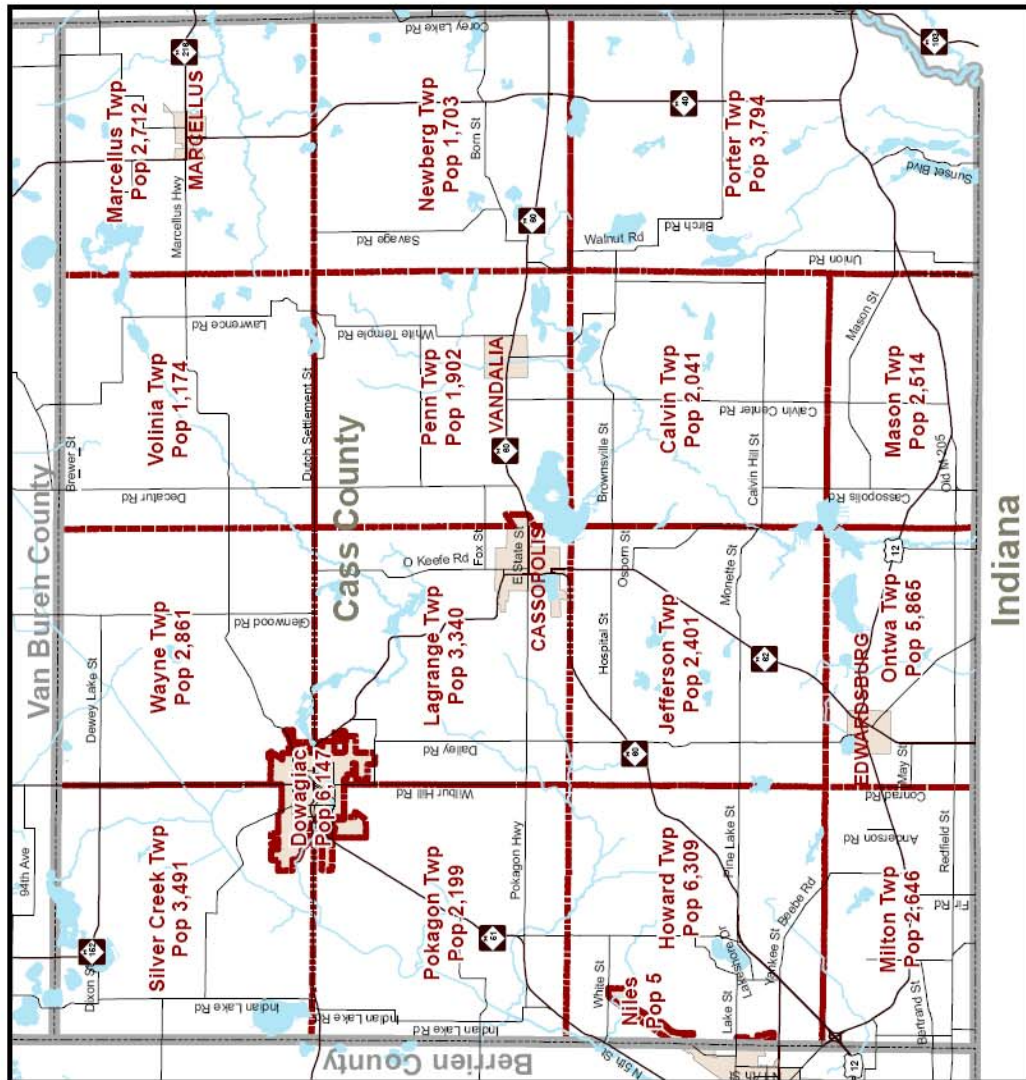
## Municipalities

City of Dowagiac  
 Village of Cassopolis\*  
 Village of Edwardsburg  
 Village of Marcellus  
 Village of Vandalia  
 Calvin Township  
 Howard Township  
 Jefferson Township  
 LaGrange Township  
 Marcellus Township  
 Mason Township  
 Milton Township  
 Newberg Township  
 Ontwa Township  
 Penn Township  
 Pokagon Township  
 Porter Township  
 Silver Creek Township  
 Volinia Township  
 Wayne Township

\*Serves as the county seat



**County**  
**Minor Civil Division**  
**Population 2000 Census**



0 1 2 4 Miles

Base Map Source: MI Center for Geographic Information, Framework (V5a)  
 Data Source: 2000 US Census



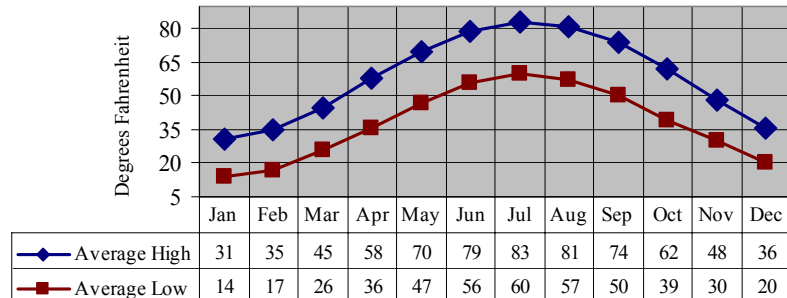
Map Prepared September 2006 by:  
**Southwest Michigan Planning Commission**  
 Tel: 269-925-1137 Fax: 269-925-0288  
 Email: [swmpc@swmpc.org](mailto:swmpc@swmpc.org)  
 Website: [www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org)

## Climate

Many outdoor recreational activities are affected by weather conditions. The four distinct annual seasons and lack of severe weather extremes however, greatly enhance the desirability of recreational pursuits in Cass County.

The following graphs show the average annual climate conditions as reported in Cassopolis, the county seat. Although weather patterns may differ from one area of the county to another, the central location of Cassopolis is a reasonable point to obtain overall climate averages for the purpose of recreation planning. The average

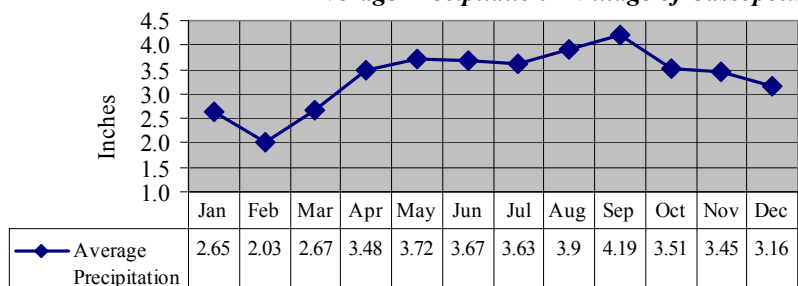
*Average Temperatures – Village of Cassopolis*



temperature graph (*above*) shows the average low to be 14° Fahrenheit in January - the lowest temperature ever recorded was -23° in February 1978. The average high is 83° Fahrenheit in July – the highest temperature ever recorded was 103° in June and July, 1999.

Average precipitation ranges from a low of 2.03 inches in February to a high of 4.19 inches in September. The average accumulated snowfall is approximately 72 inches per year. The first frost of the year is usually in early October and the last freeze of winter is typically in early May - creating an average crop-growing season of approximately

*Average Precipitation – Village of Cassopolis*



**Annual Precipitation 40.06 inches**

158 days. There is sunshine an average of 53 percent of the daylight hours with prevailing winds generally from the southwest during winter and summer.<sup>5</sup>

Considering weather patterns and climate conditions helps planners know what types of activities are amenable to the area and therefore be able to maximize the potential of each season. Including weather information in marketing materials and campaigns may give a

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.boonenewspapers.com/community/cassopolis2.shtml>

pleasant surprise to some potential consumers discovering that southwestern Michigan is not just a winter wonderland, but instead can be enjoyed year round.

### Natural Resources

The basic description of the county is a good indicator that there are a number of natural resources to be enjoyed in Cass County. This rural county has almost 190,000 acres in farmland, (808 farms) over 200 hundred waterways, and a low population density.

Waterways (AKA blueways) may include lakes, swamps, streams, rivers, and creeks; each offering a different and sometimes unique type of recreational activity. The following map shows the many waterways enjoyed by residents and visitors to Cass County.



The list below, although not completely comprehensive is a good example of lakes in the county. Some lakes are small, private, or not recorded, and are therefore not on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources list.

#### Partial List of Lakes in Cass County<sup>6</sup>

Bair Lake	Baldwin Lake	Bunker Lake
Birch Lake	Birch Lake Millpond	Christiana Lake
Cable Lake	Chain Lake	Copley Lake
Coberts Lake	Cook Lake	Driskels Lake
Diamond Lake	Donnell Lake	Fish Lake
Eagle Lake	Finch Lake	Hemlock Lake
Garver Lake	Harwood Lake	Lewis Lake
Huyck Lake	Long Lake	Miller Lake
Little Fish Lake	Pleasant Lake	Robbins Lake
Paradise Lake	Shavehead Lake	Skyhawk Lake
Saddlebag Lake	Twin Lake (south)	Twin Lake (north)
Stone Lake	Belas Lake	

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-30301\\_31431\\_31560-67549--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-30301_31431_31560-67549--,00.html)



As a nationally recognized favorite pastime, fishing is also a very popular sport and recreational activity in this area. Cass County offers an abundance of fishing opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy. The lakes listed below have been noted in particular for having a good reputation for successful fishing.<sup>7</sup> The list of fish species commonly caught is a fair representation of the fishing potential throughout the county.

#### Belas Lake

*Location:* Near Vandalia, in Cass County, Michigan

*Fish:* Black Crappie, Bluegill, Bowfin, Brown Bullhead, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Warmouth, Yellow Perch

#### Bogart Lake

*Location:* Near Marcellus, in Cass County, Michigan

*Fish:* Black Crappie, Bluegill, Bowfin, Brown Bullhead, Green Sunfish, Largemouth Bass, Pumpkinseed, Warmouth, Yellow Perch

#### Corey Lake

*Location:* Near Three Rivers, in St. Joseph, Cass County, Michigan

*Fish:* Bluegill, Cisco, Largemouth Bass, Rainbow Trout, Walleye

#### Diamond Lake

*Location:* Near Cassopolis, in Cass County, Michigan

*Fish:* Black Crappie, Bluegill, Bowfin, Green Sunfish, Largemouth Bass, Longnose Gar, Northern Pike, Pumpkinseed, Rock Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Walleye, Warmouth, Yellow Perch

#### Donnell Lake

*Location:* Near Vandalia, in Cass County, Michigan

*Fish:* Black Crappie, Bluegill, Bowfin, Brown Bullhead, Green Sunfish, Largemouth Bass, Longnose Gar, Northern Pike, Pumpkinseed, Smallmouth Bass, Warmouth, Yellow Bullhead, Yellow Perch

#### Kirk Lake

*Location:* Near Vandalia, in Cass County, Michigan

*Fish:* Bluegill, Bowfin, Brown Bullhead, Common Carp, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Pumpkinseed, Shortnose Gar, Warmouth, Yellow Perch

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.landbigfish.com/fishingspots/showcase.cfm?ID=2382>

### Magician Lake

*Location:* Near Dowagiac, in Cass, Van Buren County, Michigan

*Fish:* Black Crappie, Bluegill, Bowfin, Brown Bullhead, Largemouth Bass, Longnose Gar, Northern Pike, Pumpkinseed, Rock Bass, Warmouth, Yellow Bullhead, Yellow Perch

In addition to the fishing opportunities, the mix of farmland, forests, and water make a wonderful habitat for many types of wildlife. Most residents of southwest Michigan are aware of Cass County's top ranking in the state for hogs and pigs inventory; (some statistics report 10 times more hogs than people) however, many do not know that Cass County also ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the state in Pheasant count.<sup>8</sup>

It is well worth the effort to preserve the farmland and open spaces in the county. Keeping these natural habitats alive will provide homes for many bird, mammal, fish, and plant

*"I would like to preserve the trails for nature watching and photography."*  
*From the survey "wish list"*

species. This philosophy is important to county residents responding to the park survey who ranked fishing and wildlife viewing among their top ten favorite activities. Having places to see nature, having nature to see, and having someone teach others about nature are very desirable goals.

*\*A full Natural Features Inventory is available in the Appendix. The inventory includes flora and fauna found in the county that are on either the State or Federal lists of endangered or threatened species.*

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Data\\_and\\_Statistics/Quick\\_Stats/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Data_and_Statistics/Quick_Stats/)

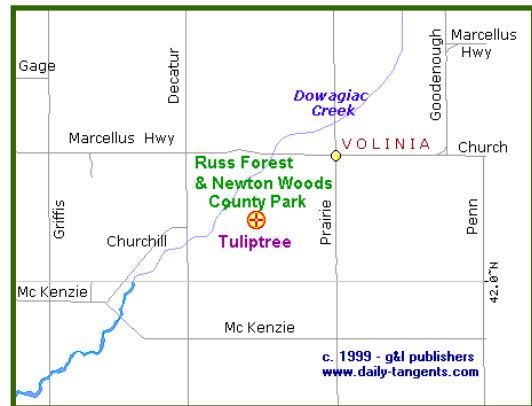
## Preservation and Cooperative Initiatives

Cass County residents have made it clear that preservation of the county's natural resources is a high priority.<sup>9</sup> There are many groups working to achieve this preservation and protection goal. The following are just a few examples.

The *Cass County Conservation District's* mission statement (below) is representative of several organizations in the county with a commitment to water and land resource preservation.

*We are dedicated to protecting and enhancing Cass County's natural resources by providing educational and technical services to all landowners.*<sup>10</sup>

Using park facilities to combine education with recreation is an excellent way to reach youth and awaken an interest in, and an appreciation for, the environment and our impact on natural resources. One of the educational opportunities provided through a partnership with the Conservation District and the County Parks Department, is the annual 5th and 6th grade Conservation Day Tour of Russ Forest - home of Michigan's champion Tuliptree. (See map at right) The 2006 tour brought one hundred and seventy 5th grade students from Sam Adams



Middle School and Marcellus Middle School, and two hundred 6th grade students from

*"Organized nature walks with knowledgeable leaders including night star-walks."*

From the survey "wish list"

Edwardsburg Middle School to Russ Forest. Students made several "station" stops to learn about streams, groundwater, invasive species, soils, wildlife, and other natural resources.<sup>11</sup> The desire for activities combining recreation and education is a popular and

recurring goal for the future development of Cass County parks.

The Dowagiac River System is the focus of a not-for-profit organization (*MEANDRS*) governed by riparian property owners, local government officials, and technical advisors from regional and State authorities and other interested groups. This partnership for *Meeting Ecological and Agricultural Needs within the Dowagiac River System* is interested in the

<sup>9</sup> *Public Visioning/Survey Results (2006)*

<sup>10</sup> *Cass County Conservation District website - <http://casscd.org/>*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

protection and restoration of the Dowagiac River System and provides educational opportunities to promote a better understanding of watershed preservation issues.<sup>12</sup>

The *Friends of the St. Joseph River (FOTSJR)* are dedicated to the preservation and protection of the St. Joseph River Watershed. Sub-watersheds of the St. Joseph River in Cass County include Rocky River, Mill Creek, Donnell Lake, Christiana Creek, Cobus Creek, and Brandywine Creek.<sup>13</sup> Educational opportunities are provided by FOTSJR through workshops and forums sponsored by state and local group partnerships from Indiana and Michigan.

The following excerpt provides another example of partnering organizations involving cooperative efforts with northern Indiana and southern Michigan counties.

*In 2004 and 2005, trail enthusiasts, park and recreation leaders, government officials, planners, transportation authorities and economic development coordinators gathered to discuss trails and trail linkages in northern Indiana and southwestern Michigan. Initially representatives met from individual counties to map existing, planned, and “wish list” trails and greenways. In July 2005, representatives from 10 counties in northern Indiana and southwestern Michigan convened for the Michiana Greenways and Trails Charrette to discuss multi-county and multi-state linkages. The outcome was a “vision” for regional greenways. Dialogue continues between the various parties involved in the charrettes regarding strategies to move the regional trails and greenways vision forward.*<sup>14</sup>

The map on the following page demonstrates the ideas developed through these dialogues. Although these particular trails are not definitely planned at this time, planners and trail supporters could use the map as a guide to continue to seek the vision for regional greenways.

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<sup>12</sup> MEANDRS - <http://casscd.org/meandrs.htm>

<sup>13</sup> *St. Joseph River Watershed Management Plan (2005)*

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.sjcparks.org/greenways/index.html>

Many national studies show a tremendous interest in trail-based recreation. Some interesting points include:

- The number of Americans who participate in bicycling is double the population of Canada
- More Americans paddle (kayak, canoe, raft) than play soccer
- 66 million Americans pursue wildlife viewing each year as a form of recreation<sup>15</sup>

In Cass County, trails of all kinds, (waterway, bicycle, hiking, cross-country skiing, and equestrian) ranked high in the park survey. Relative to the interest in trails is the request for more benches along the way. Benches are a useful amenity for young and old alike – not just to rest, but to relax and enjoy the sights, smells, and sounds of nature. Creating such opportunities for trail guests may allow for a much deeper appreciation of nature and awaken a new sense of responsibility to preserve its beauty.



*T.K. Lawless Park Bench*

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<sup>15</sup> [www.outdoorindustry.org/pdf/FinalOutdoorRecreationReportEC.pdf](http://www.outdoorindustry.org/pdf/FinalOutdoorRecreationReportEC.pdf)





COUNTY MAP FOR  
**CASS COUNTY-  
MICHIGAN**  
SAMPLE MAP  
MARCH 31, 2006  
REVISION JULY 26, 2006  
SCALE 1"=16.00'

#### GREENWAYS AND TRAILS LEGEND:

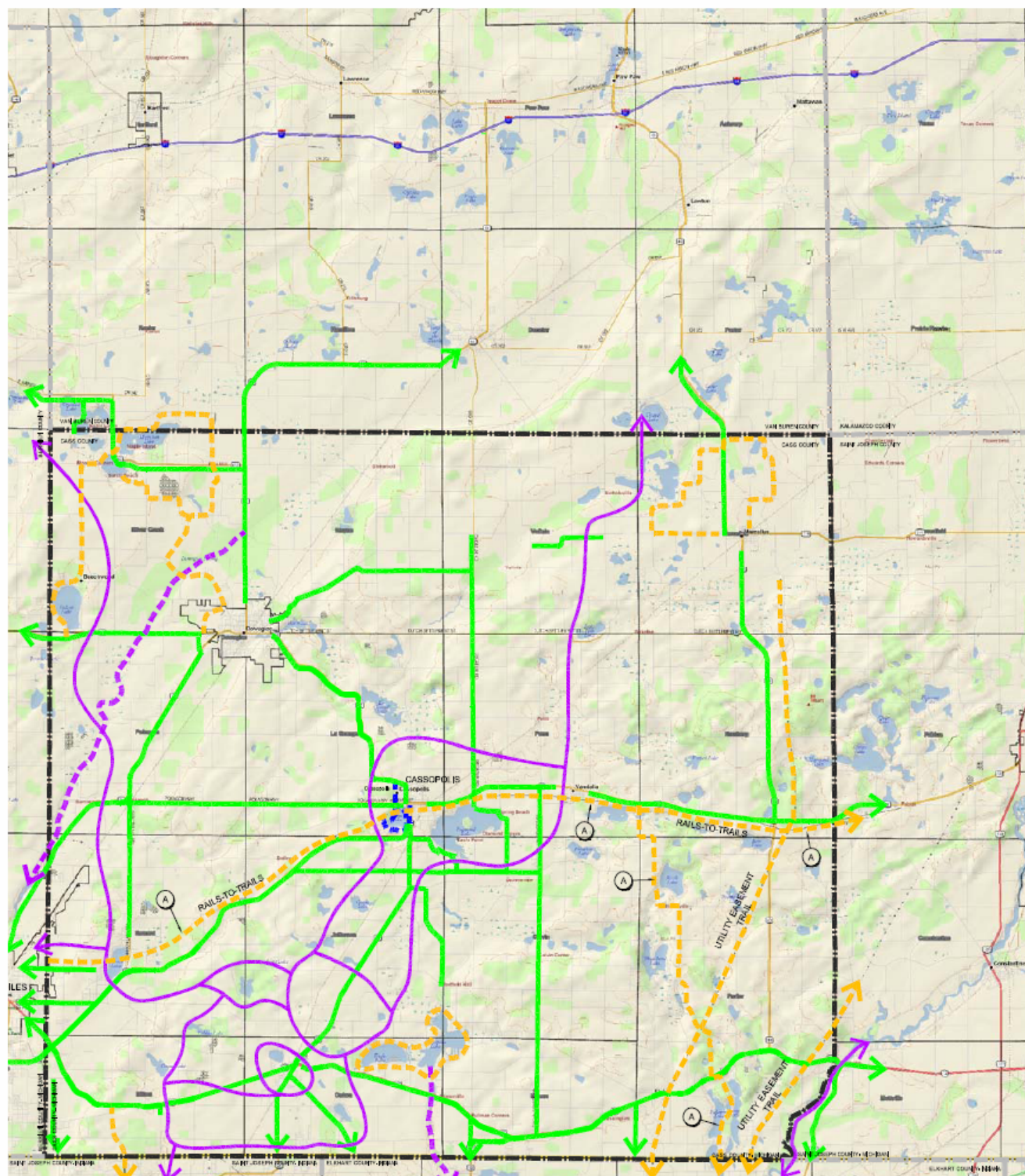
- EXISTING TRAILS, GREENWAYS, & BIKeways
- PLANNED TRAILS, GREENWAYS, & BIKeways
- POTENTIAL TRAILS, GREENWAYS, & BIKeways
- EXISTING SPECIALTY TRAILS (SNOWMOBILES, SQUASHTANG, WATER TRAILS, ETC.)
- FUTURE SPECIALTY TRAILS (SNOWMOBILES, SQUASHTANG, WATER TRAILS, ETC.)
- SUGGESTED PRIORITY GREENWAYS SEGMENT

#### MAP INFORMATION SOURCES:

- The greenways and trails map was assembled from the following information:
- Michigan work sessions conducted by local trail organizations with regional planning groups, towns, cities, and county agencies.
- Regional planning work plans of various city, county, and regional planning agencies.
- Regional Planning Workshop held on June 14, 2006.

#### PRIORITY TRAILS:

- The following is a list of greenways and trails that have been noted within the Regional Greenways Characterization Workshop as having top priority for planning implementation.
- Walkway and/or trail from the north end of the county to the south end of the county.
- Walkway and/or trail from the east end of the county to the west end of the county.



## Social Characteristics

### Population

As seen in the following population chart, (next page) although the population of Cass County has grown 81 percent since 1950, population growth has been slow since 1980 – there was even a slight decrease in 1990.

With the increased popularity of rural homes and waterfront cottages the county is anticipating a somewhat faster rate of growth in the coming years. One indication of this possibility is the number of summer/weekend vacation homes in the county. In 2000, there were over 3,000 homes (12.7 percent of total homes) designated as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.<sup>16</sup> An increase in this type of home ownership designation may have an impact on recreational facilities and programs - not only in the number of consumers and the days of visitation, (weekends may become busier) but also in the types of activities desired and pursued.



A 2006 study reflecting changes and new realities in rural populations, offers two more trends that may be applicable to Cass County.

*“Immigration and racial diversity has increased in rural places, and will likely continue to increase” and “places with high amenities (such as natural beauty and recreational opportunities) are attracting new migrants into rural areas.”<sup>17</sup>*

The following table compares Cass County with the metropolitan areas of Detroit and Chicago. In addition to the numerous lakes and waterways and the popularity of second and get-away homes, the rural atmosphere and low population density also make Cass County an attractive primary residential location.

Population Density Comparisons (2000) <sup>18</sup>		
<b>Detroit</b>	6,856	People per square mile
<b>Chicago</b>	12,604	People per square mile
<b>Cass County</b>	104	People per square mile

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

<sup>17</sup> Annie Casey Foundation (2006)

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2000)

An indication of the likelihood of this prediction is the rate of growth in townships versus the growth in villages. Municipalities experiencing more than a 100 percent growth since 1950 are indicated (\*) in the population chart below.

**Population Changes in Cass County 1950 - 2000<sup>19</sup>**

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1950-2000
<b>Cass County</b>	28,185	36,932	43,312	49,499	49,477	51,104	81%
<b>*Calvin township</b>	996	1,172	1,347	1,643	1,813	2,041	105%
<b>Dowagiac city</b>	6,542	7,208	6,583	6,307	6,409	6,147	-6%
<b>*Howard township</b>	2,952	4,622	5,497	6,524	6,378	6,309	114%
<b>*Jefferson township</b>	987	1,255	1,718	1,963	2,112	2,401	143%
<b>La Grange township</b>	2,488	3,321	3,583	3,526	3,406	3,340	34%
<b>Cassopolis village</b>	1,527	2,027	2,108	1,933	1,822	1,740	14%
<b>Marcellus township</b>	1,621	1,814	2,006	2,463	2,569	2,712	67%
<b>Marcellus village</b>	1,014	1,073	1,139	1,134	1,193	1,162	15%
<b>*Mason township</b>	590	853	1,519	2,132	2,450	2,514	326%
<b>*Milton township</b>	1,179	1,541	1,727	2,235	2,284	2,646	124%
<b>Newberg township</b>	907	1,023	1,174	1,382	1,627	1,703	88%
<b>*Ontwa township</b>	2,020	3,772	5,224	5,787	5,592	5,865	190%
<b>Edwardsburg village</b>	616	902	1,107	1,135	1,142	1,147	86%
<b>Penn township</b>	1,164	1,522	1,775	2,044	1,877	1,902	63%
<b>Vandalia village</b>	360	357	427	447	357	429	19%
<b>Pokagon township</b>	1,518	1,935	2,189	2,394	2,188	2,199	45%
<b>*Porter township</b>	1,402	2,001	2,765	3,857	3,857	3,794	171%
<b>Silver Creek township</b>	1,773	2,108	2,886	3,361	3,101	3,491	97%
<b>Volinia township</b>	774	815	986	1,182	1,032	1,174	52%
<b>*Wayne township</b>	1,272	1,970	2,333	2,699	2,780	2,861	125%

*\*Municipalities with over 100% increase in population from 1950 to 2000*

### Special Considerations

When planning recreational facilities, it is important to consider any special needs or desires of potential consumers. Age, gender, race, language, physical ability/disability, and even income level may be factors affecting recreation choices. Understanding national trends in recreation and leisure choices enjoyed by different groups can provide some insight into how these choices and needs are being provided for. Questions to consider asking may include what the different recreational needs are of men versus women or youth versus adults? Are

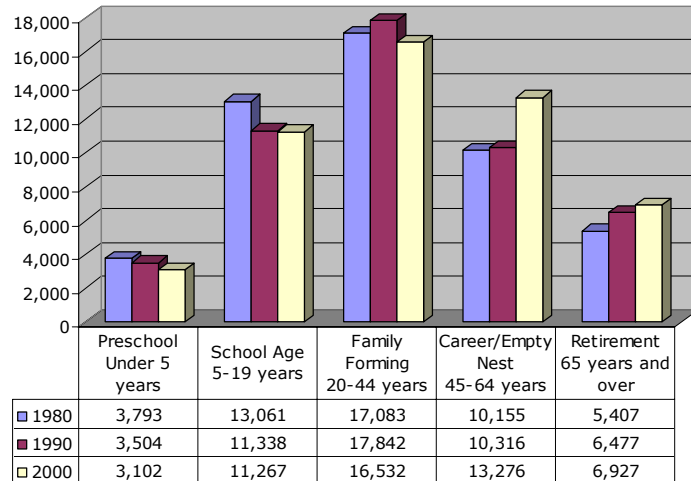
<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2000)



there choices available that are suitable for every socio-economic level? Are there required fees or equipment, and are the facilities easily accessible?

### Age Distribution

Similar to national trends, Cass County has begun to see an increase in the population aged 45 years and older. The chart at the right represents the division of population by age cohort and clearly shows the steady increase in the *Retirement* group and the jump in the *Career/Empty Nest* group. Also note the decline in all three age groups younger than 45 years.



Since age distribution can be an important factor to consider for future recreational needs, the following table looks at the changes in age distribution by percentage of total population. (1980-2000) Although the population between the ages of 20 - 44 years, the *Family Forming* cohort, has declined since 1980, this age group still comprises the largest sector of the population.

**Change in Age Distribution Shown by Percent of Total**

	1980	% of Total	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total
<b>Preschool Under 5 years</b>	3,793	7.7%	3,504	7.1%	3,102	6.1%
<b>School Age 5-19 years</b>	13,061	26.4%	11,338	22.9%	11,267	22.0%
<b>Family Forming 20-44 years</b>	17,083	34.5%	17,842	36.1%	16,532	32.3%
<b>Career/Empty Nest 45-64 years</b>	10,155	20.5%	10,316	20.9%	13,276	26.0%
<b>Retirement 65 years and over</b>	5,407	10.9%	6,477	13.1%	6,927	13.6%
<b>Total Population</b>	49,499		49,477		51,104	

Applying the knowledge of changes in age distribution to local recreational planning can be accomplished through the observation of national trends tracking the most popular travel/leisure/recreation pursuits. The trends of one age group in particular seem to have been surveyed and observed more than any other - the Baby Boomers! This generation

includes those born between 1946 and 1964, which means the first group of Baby Boomers turned 60 this year. The following paragraph demonstrates that if national trends bear relevance to southwest Michigan, then Cass County has a lot to offer this age group.

*Birding is the fastest-growing form of outdoor recreation in the United States; over 85 million people watched or photographed birds in 2004, according to a study by the USDA Forest Service. It's also big business: Americans spend over \$30 billion a year on all those bird feeders, trips, scopes, and guidebooks. And it's especially popular among baby boomers: the average age of birders is 49.<sup>20</sup>*

Local *baby boomers* and those over the age of 61 years echoed this trend through their response to the park survey by listing the following as their top five favorite activities and/or facilities.

- Nature Centers
- Hiking Trails
- Picnic Areas
- Nature watching
- Natural Resource Preservation



Part of the marketing strategy for *things to see and do in Cass County* could include mention of the opportunities to observe local favorite bird species such as Bluebirds and the rare Eurasian Tree Sparrow also spotted in Cass County.<sup>21</sup>

### Special Needs

Over 20 percent of the population over the age of five years, reports some type of disability. To meet the needs of this population sector, the project list for each of the facilities covered by this plan includes efforts to increase accessibility.

Almost 12 percent of the county's population reports a household income below poverty levels. The majority of facilities in the county are available for use without a fee, allowing equal access regardless of financial means.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.aarpmagazine.org/lifestyle/birders\\_delight.html](http://www.aarpmagazine.org/lifestyle/birders_delight.html)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.rarebirds.com/listing/1344/>



The gender distribution in the county is statistically equal with 100 females to 99.9 males. Planning to accommodate the needs and desires of both genders continues to be an important facet of facility and program planning.

The distribution of population by category of race is demonstrated in the table below. No recent surveys of park and recreation facility usage have been done in Cass County with race or ethnic identifiers – only age and residency have been recorded. Although there is not a significant population sector by any particular racial category other than *White*, there is an expressed desire to meet the needs of any and all who wish to participate in recreation programs or use park facilities.

#### **Cass County Population Distribution by Race (2000)**

- White – 89.2%
- Black or African American – 6.1%
- Native American – 0.8%
- Asian – 0.5%
- Hispanic or Latino – 2.4%
- Other – 1.2%

#### **Educational Achievement**

In addition to creating an inventory of school recreational facilities and programs that are available to the public, knowledge of student enrollment and educational achievement plays a part in knowing what programs and recreation development projects a community should plan for.

Cass County has four complete school districts within its boundaries and shares portions of nine other school districts with the adjacent counties of Berrien, Van Buren, and St. Joseph. In 2004 there were 7,431 students enrolled in grades K-12. Cass County is also the home of Southwestern Michigan College, a public community college (annual enrollment is approximately 3,000) with campuses located in the City of Dowagiac and the City of Niles.

The percentage of residents with a high school diploma in Cass County is equal to that of the nation as a whole; however, the percentage of those with a Bachelor's degree or higher is approximately half that of the nation.

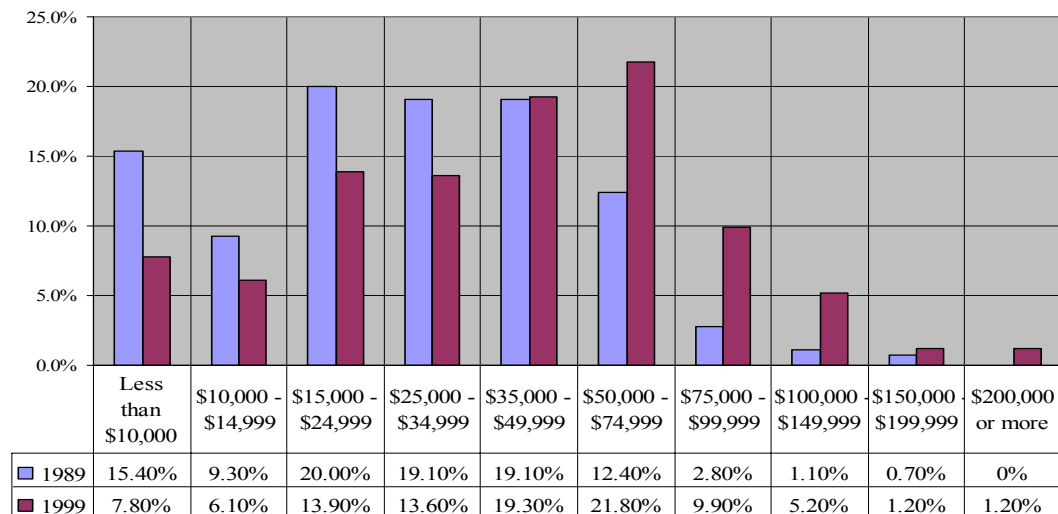
<b>Level of Education Comparison (2000)</b>		
	<b>Cass County</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>High School diploma</b>	80.4%	80.4%
<b>Bachelor's degree or higher</b>	12.1%	24.4%

### Economic Characteristics

The major employment industries in the county are manufacturing, education, health, and social services. Within those industries, the most common occupations are in production, transportation, and material moving as well as sales and office occupations.

INDUSTRY	Number of Employed	Percent of Total
Manufacturing	8,389	33.8%
Educational, health and social services	4,128	16.7%
Retail trade	2,618	10.6%
Construction	1,646	6.6%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	1,446	5.8%
Other services (except public administration)	1,148	4.6%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	1,102	4.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,060	4.3%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	892	3.6%
Wholesale trade	788	3.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	663	2.7%
Public administration	567	2.3%
Information	341	1.4%

Since the 1990 Census, (1989 income information) there has been a dramatic change in the reported household incomes in the county. Not only did the percentage of households making over \$50,000 per year more than double as reported in the 2000 Census, (1999 income information) the percentage of those making less than \$35,000 has also sharply declined. Even so, the household median income for the county (\$41,387) is still only 89.4 percent of Michigan's household median income (\$46,291).



## Recreation and the Economy

The economic impact of recreational attractions and their subsequent connection to tourism is an important consideration when planning facilities and programs. Looking outward as well as inward will help determine the types of investment that will reap the greatest reward. A thorough look at existing assets coupled with a comparison of national trends will bring focus to creating a recreation and leisure market that will meet the goals and objectives of Cass County's parks and recreation administrative leadership, supporters, and consumers.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture<sup>22</sup>, the jobs, tax revenues, and business created by the Active Outdoor Recreation Economy are the lifeblood of rural communities that rely on recreation tourism to enjoy a high quality of life. Benefits of rural tourism and recreational development include:

- ✓ Spikes in employment growth rates
- ✓ Buoyed earnings and income levels
- ✓ Lowered local poverty rates
- ✓ Improvement in local educational attainment and health

Although Cass County is largely agricultural (based on farmland acres) only 1 percent of the residents make their living in farming. The annual contribution of agriculture to the local economy however, is a substantial \$64 million dollars.<sup>23</sup> An interesting idea to increase this economic contribution is to consider the combination of agriculture, tourism, and recreation.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture promotes value-added initiatives to assist farmers seeking to increase their income. Some of the suggestions for agricultural product alternatives relevant to this plan include U-pick operations, roadside stands, and "agritainment" enterprises using natural resources for such activities as hayrides, fee fishing or hunting, and bird watching.<sup>24</sup>



*Big Dan's U-Pick*

<sup>22</sup> USDA, Economic Research Service, August 2005

<sup>23</sup> NASS Fact Finders for Agriculture 2002 Census of Agriculture County Profile. Market Value of Production.

<sup>24</sup> USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (Alternative Enterprises-Value Added Agriculture)  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/RESS/altenterprise/info\\_valueadded.pdf](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/RESS/altenterprise/info_valueadded.pdf)

Dog parks are another interesting idea that has become quite popular in other parts of the country. Typically found near larger population areas the idea is spreading to vacation and recreation areas. Although it is not necessarily agriculture-based, it is worth considering – evidently some Cass County residents are already supportive of the idea and willing to pay for this form of outdoor recreation.

*"I would love to have an off-leash dog park and would be willing to pay a reasonable membership fee for it."*  
From the survey "wish list"

As the popularity of these activities continues to grow, the appeal of Cass County as a recreation destination becomes more evident. The need for, and value in, promoting responsible use of natural resources is also confirmed. It is possible, profitable, and desirable to provide recreation without adversely affecting the environment.

### **Transportation Systems**

How do residents and visitors get to the parks? How accessible are the recreational opportunities? Not only is it important to have great facilities and activities, it is also important that getting there is easy too. The Action Plan has addressed this issue by calling for increased and improved signage to direct visitors to the desired facility. There is also a plan to develop the website and other marketing tools to make a recreational visit in Cass County an enjoyable and stress-free trip. Transportation can sometimes be challenging in this county, but as long as the way is not too complicated, the scenic route can become part of the adventure.

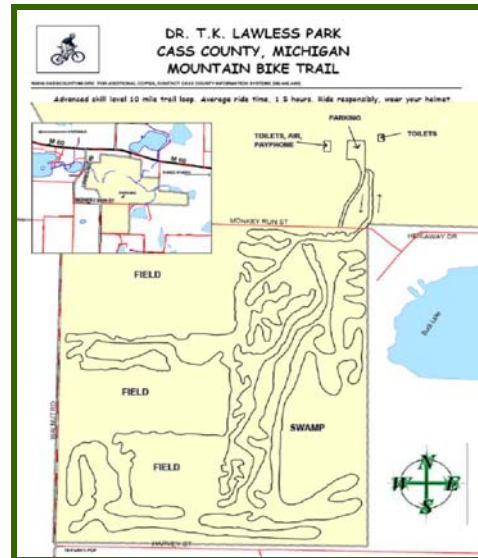
*Highways* - Although there are no interstate highways traversing Cass County there are a number of scenic highways facilitating transportation throughout the county. One of these highways is US-12, a designated heritage trail crossing the county east to west along the southern border.

*Airports* - There is a municipal airport in the city of Dowagiac and a number of private airfields and heliports throughout the county. The proximity of the South Bend Regional Airport in Indiana (just south of the Cass County border) is also a viable option and has connections to several major airports.

*Public Transportation* - Cass County Transportation Authority provides public transportation throughout the county. This transit system consists of eleven small buses providing demand-response and semi-fixed route service. The City of Dowagiac provides on-demand Dial-A-Ride services out of its historic train depot.

*Rail Service* - Amtrak provides convenient travel to either Chicago or Detroit from the downtown Dowagiac historic train depot.

*Non-motorized* – One of the most popular forms of recreation is also becoming a favored transportation method. Due to increased interest in physical health, rising fuel costs, and a change in social attitude, non-motorized trails are growing in popularity. The term is typically used to mean a trail (traversed without motorized vehicle) between destinations, i.e. home to work. Many communities are either studying the feasibility of non-motorized trails in their area, planning for, or have already implemented this type of transportation method. In Cass County, there are several bike trails that are being considered as possible connection points for non-motorized transportation. Other plans are being considered for an interconnected trail system that would include using existing and proposed rails to trails.





## COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

*In 1978, the Cass County Board of Commissioners assigned the responsibility* for operation, maintenance, and development of the county park system to the County Road Commission under Michigan Act 1913 PA 90. The Cass County Road Commission established a Parks Department within their structure for the operation, maintenance, and development of County and Road Commission Parks. The position of parks director and necessary staff was also created.

The following serve the Parks Department in advisory capacities:

- *Park Advisory Board* - appointed to advise the Road Commission on operation and maintenance of the park system.
- *Parks Advisory Council* - makes recommendations regarding projects and programs for the continued development and expansion of the county parks system.
- *Cass County Planning Commission* – makes recommendations on major new capital improvements or additions to the park system.

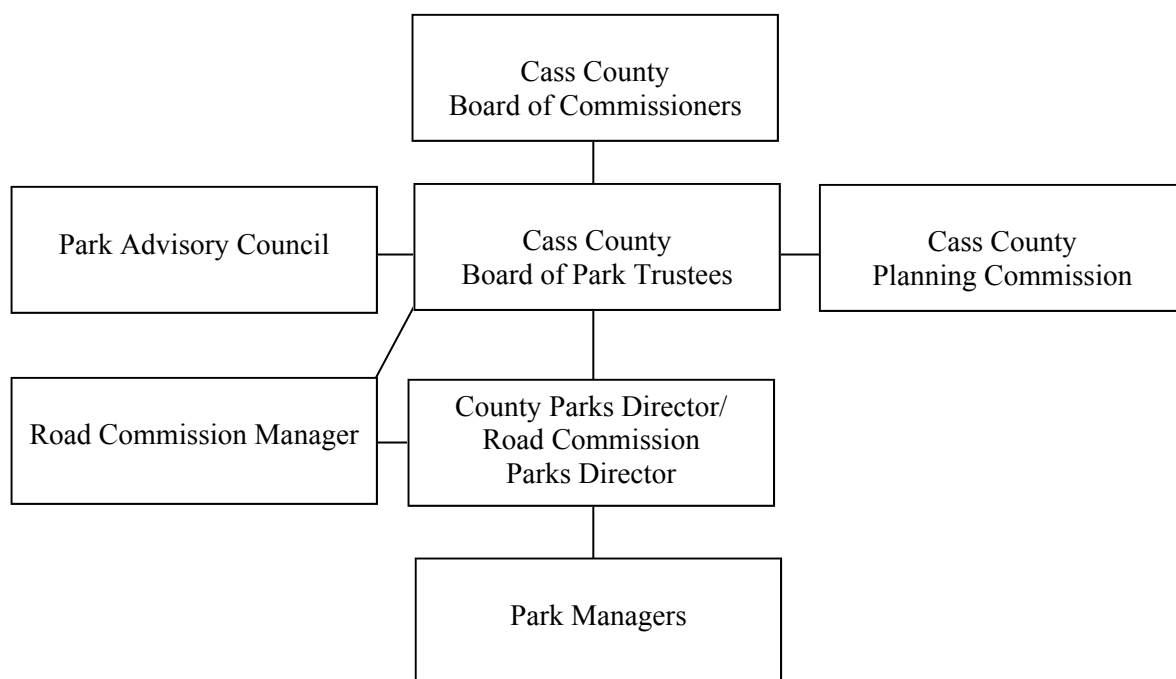
General appropriation funds are authorized annually by the Cass County Board of Commissioners to the County Road Commission for the operation, maintenance, and expansion of the county park system. The County Road Commission also appropriates funds for the Road Commission Park facilities.<sup>25</sup>

Five-Year Budget	County Parks	Road Commission Parks
2007	\$73,000	\$60,000
2008	\$80,000	\$60,000
2009	\$90,000	\$63,000
2010	\$100,000	\$65,000
2011	\$120,000	\$65,000

Many volunteer groups assist the park in a variety of ways. The most consistent volunteer group is the Friends of Cass County Parks. This well-organized group meets once a month and helps organize fundraisers, promotes the parks, does light maintenance, and offers overall general support of the parks in Cass County

<sup>25</sup> *Park and Open Space Plan, Cass County Michigan (2001-2005)*

### Parks Department Organizational Chart



## RECREATION INVENTORY

### Summarized Inventory of Municipal Recreational Facilities

In 2006, each municipality in the county was asked to inventory the amenities available at the recreational facilities located in, owned, or controlled by the municipality. The following table is a summary of the amenities available in Cass County as reported by each municipality. *(The inventory includes school facilities which may or may not have unlimited availability to the public.)*

Number of Water Related Facilities		Number of Facilities Offering Winter Activities	
Water Access	75	Cross Country Skiing	11
Fishing	58	Sledding	4
Boat Launch	46	Downhill Skiing	2
Canoeing	39	Number of Picnic Facilities	
Water Sports	35	Playgrounds	56
Swimming	16	Picnicking	41
Number of Facilities with Trails		Shelter/Pavilion	32
Hiking Trails	23	Number of Facilities with Sports and Games	
Biking Trails	8	Outdoor Sports	73
Fitness Trails	5	Indoor Sports	19
Equestrian Trails	4	Volleyball	19
Number of Camping Facilities		Horseshoes	18
Public Camping	14	Ball Golf	2
Group Camping	12	Disc Golf	0
Dump Stations	8	Public Hunting	8
Number of Facilities with Conveniences		Number of Barrier-Free Facilities	
Modern Restrooms	50	ADA Accessible	59
Primitive Restrooms	30		
Public Phone	28		

*\*A detailed matrix is available in the Appendix showing the entire inventory of amenities divided by, and as reported by, each municipality.*

**Status Report for Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities**

**Project Number:** TF89-251      **Project Year:** 1989      **Project Status:** Closed

**Project Title:** Dr. T.K. Lawless Park Improvements

This grant helped shape Lawless Park. Improvements included a lighted parking area, picnic shelter / electric, picnic tables and grills, play equipment, one mile handicap trail improvement, rustic two-rail fence, entrance sign, open games field, and modern toilet facilities. All improvements are currently operational, and in good shape.

**Project Number:** TF96-087      **Project Year:** 1996      **Project Status:** Closed

**Project Title:** Dr. T.K. Lawless Park East 80

This grant purchased 80 acres of rolling hills, beautiful hardwoods and lake frontage on Lime and Wetherbe lakes. This land currently has over two miles of hiking, biking and cross country skiing trails. There is lake access to both lakes for summer and winter fishing, as well as a controlled hunting program.

**Project Number:** TF99-226      **Project Year:** 1999      **Project Status:** Closed

**Project Title:** Dr. T.K. Lawless Park North (Acquisition)

This land was purchased from a local farmer to allow the installation of a multi-use trail all the way around the park. Currently the trail has been roughed in, and a thirty-foot bridge and 100' of boardwalk are complete. The rest of the boardwalk will be completed next spring by an Eagle Scout, and with that, the trail should be ready for traffic. This acreage is also in the hunting program, and is open to all visitors. This land also provides access to the old Airline Railroad right-of-way so a connection to a rail/trail from Cassopolis would be a possibility in the future.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Parks Department

**Inventory of County Parks Department Recreational Facilities**

The county park facilities were inventoried by SWMC staff and the County Parks Department director and were evaluated using the accessibility assessment standards listed below.<sup>27</sup> The following pages include a description of amenity highlights, location, and assessment of each park operated by the County.

**Accessibility Assessments:**

- 1 = none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 2 = some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 3 = most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines
- 4 = the entire park meets accessibility guidelines
- 5 = the entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design.

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<sup>27</sup> *Michigan Department of Natural Resources*



## **Arthur Dodd Memorial Park**

Located on Creek Road, along the Dowagiac Creek, five miles northeast of the City of Niles, this 51-acre park offers its visitors wonderful opportunities to fish, canoe, or kayak. Arthur Dodd is a natural resource area and home to one of the sites for the Dowagiac River MEANDRS<sup>28</sup> project. With three picnic shelters, play equipment, and a number of other amenities, Arthur Dodd is also a popular community park.

### **Park Amenities**

- Picnicking
- Play equipment (New equipment installed in 2002)
- Picnic shelters (3)
- Fishing (Class A trout stream)
- Horseshoe Pits (2)
- One-mile hiking trail
- Volleyball court
- Open games area
- Canoe landing
- Electricity at each shelter
- Security lighting
- Rustic restrooms
- Fresh well water



### **General Information**

- Park hours posted at park
- No entrance fee (donations are appreciated)
- Park Open mid-April through October
- Limited parking

### **Accessibility Rating: 2**

Some of the park facilities at Arthur Dodd Park meet accessibility guidelines. The walkways are not paved but are hard packed and there are no stairs. The park has two rustic restrooms and a fresh water pump. These amenities have limited accessibility. The picnic pavilion has a wheelchair accessible table.

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*28 Meeting Ecological and Agricultural Needs within the Dowagiac River System*

### **Veteran's Memorial Park**

This special-use park is located on M-62 just west of Cassopolis and four miles southeast of the City of Dowagiac. Veteran's Memorial Park is a quiet, well-shaded park with benches, flag poles, and a commemorative plaque.

#### **Accessibility Rating: 2**

There are no stairs or barriers between the parking area and the memorial. There is no paved access, however the lawn is level. There are no amenities.



### **Beeson Street Park**

This mini-park is a roadside picnic area at the corner of Beeson Street and M-62 across the road from Veteran's Memorial Park.

#### **Accessibility Rating: 2**

There are no stairs or barriers between the off-road parking area and the picnic facilities. There are no paved access routes and no amenities.

## **Fred Russ Forest Park**

Located within the 580-acre Fred Russ research forest, (on Marcellus Highway, eight miles east of Dowagiac) this 13-acre natural resource area is one of the most visited parks in Cass County. Fred Russ Forest is on both sides of a Dowagiac Creek Tributary and serves as a trailhead for equestrians.

There are a number of amenities (see below) including picnic tables, walking trails, and a lookout spot for wildlife viewing. Russ Forest is also home of the largest tulip poplar tree (AKA Tuliptree) in Michigan. Standing approximately 180 feet tall, this tree has a 15-foot circumference, and is over 300 years old.

### **Park Amenities**

- Picnic facilities (three shelters with electricity)
- Play equipment
- Fishing
- Horseshoe Pit
- Canoe landing
- Rustic restrooms
- Over four miles of hiking trails, equestrian trails and cross-country skiing trails.
- Security lighting
- Fresh well water
- Park is open year-round



### **Accessibility Rating: 2**

Russ Forest does not have any paved walkways; however, the areas around the picnic shelters are close to the parking lot and are hard-packed and level.

### **Stevens Lakeside Memorial Park**

This two-acre mini park provides public access swimming in Little Fish Lake and is located 0.2 miles west of Lawrence Road on the north side of the lake. The park is open sunrise to sunset May through September.

#### **Park Amenities**

Amenities include a picnic area, open games field, beach, rustic bathrooms, fresh well water from a pump and a small picnic shelter.



#### **Accessibility Rating: 2**

No physical barriers blocking the area, but not wheelchair accessible and bathrooms are rustic.

## **Dr. T.K. Lawless Park**

The largest community park in Cass County, T.K. Lawless offers a wide variety of leisure and recreational opportunities. Located on Monkey Run Street, nine miles east of Cassopolis off M-60 and Lewis Lake Road, this 820-acre natural resource area is open year-round for all-season recreation.

In addition to the many opportunities for outdoor activities, the park also has modern and convenient comfort facilities, and a rustic campground suitable for individuals or groups. (See below)

### **Park Amenities**

- Leisure biking (7 miles)
- Mountain biking (10 miles)
- Hiking trails (7 miles)
- Cross-country skiing (7 miles of groomed trails)
- Picnicking
- Two ball fields
- Soccer field
- Horse shoe pits
- Fishing
- Inner tube sledding (tubes provided)
- Fully accessible paved trail (1 mile)
- Play equipment
- Two picnic shelters
- Open games field
- Volleyball court
- Disc Golf
- Modern restrooms
- Electricity at each shelter
- Large parking area
- Security lighting
- Fresh well water (pump)
- Fireplace
- Public phone
- Entrance fee: \$1.00 county resident, \$2.00 non-county resident



\*Helmet required for all cycling



**Coy-Steiding Group Camp (Part of T.K. Lawless Park)**

- Organized groups only
- 15 rustic campsites, each with fire ring and table
- Cabin (sleeps 4-6)
- Picnic shelter with tables
- Fresh well water
- Fire bowl
- Reservations required

**Accessibility Rating: 2**

Full barrier-free bathrooms, telephone, and drinking fountain. There is a one-mile paved walkway with mostly level, hard packed surfaces and no stairs. The picnic pavilion is paved and has an accessible table.

## **Henry Sears Boat Launch**

Serving as a public boat launch, this mini-park is located at the intersection of Birch Road and Lake Shore Drive on the south side of Birch Lake.

### **Park Amenities**

Boat launch

**Accessibility Rating: Unrated**



### **Harmon Park East**

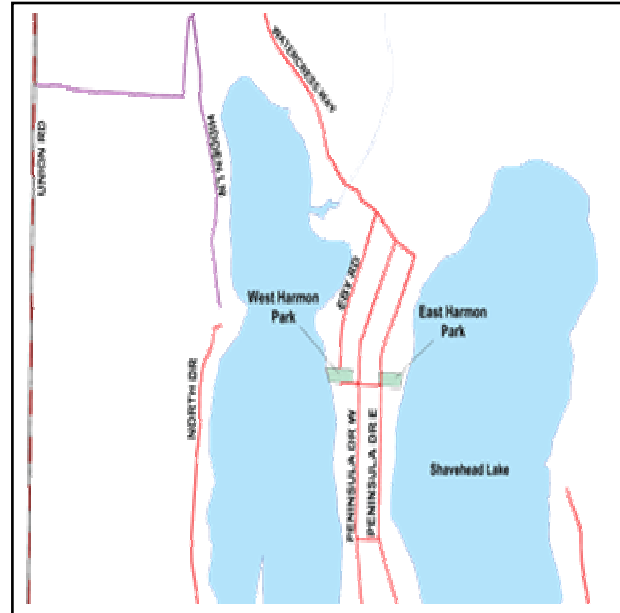
Located on the Shavehead Lake peninsula, this mini-park provides public swimming access to Shavehead Lake.

#### **Park Amenities**

The park has a small children's playground, limited parking, and has one portable bathroom facility.

#### **Accessibility Rating: 2**

Limited parking, limited access bathroom facility



### **Harmon Park West**

Also a mini park, Harmon West is a public boat launch accessing Shavehead Lake.

#### **Park Amenities**

Picnic Pavilion. Limited parking.

#### **Accessibility Rating: 2**

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

*The Parks Department, along with citizen representatives and municipal leaders* of Cass County recognize the benefits of a plan that includes working together as a steering committee to guide the process of identifying community recreational needs and to create a vision for the future of Cass County. The steering committee ensured that the recreational needs and desires of all community residents were addressed by encouraging public participation in a number of ways. Recognizing the unique agricultural and natural resource gifts already present in the county, the steering committee also gave attention to developing recreational facilities and venues that would attract visitors to the area.

A systems approach was used to develop this park, recreation, open space, and greenway plan. Previous surveys and assessments were studied and compared with current surveys and the public visioning workshop. The steering committee members participated in discussions related to this information and were instrumental in its analysis.

Detailed inventories were distributed to each municipality in Cass County with a request to update and assess the recreational facilities with the specific criteria provided. (See Appendix) The updated municipal inventories were then compiled into a countywide inventory for the purpose of determining current and future needs. Information was also gathered from previous investigative efforts (2000-2001) regarding Cass County's compliance with established park and recreation standards and updated to reflect the current status of the County's compliance to the standards.

The demographic characteristics of the county were studied and played an integral part in the needs assessment portion of the plan. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission participated in the development of the plan through research and analysis, the development of materials, and in the conducting of the steering committee meetings, and public input sessions. After a thorough assessment of resident's needs and desires, the steering committee worked with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission in the development phase of establishing community recreation goals, objectives, and action program.

February 27, 2006

Steering Committee Meeting #1  
Parks Department/Cass County Road Commission (Cassopolis)

March 20, 2006

Steering Committee Meeting #2  
The Sanctuary at Wildwood (Jones)

April 17, 2006

Public Visioning Session  
Council on Aging (Cassopolis)

April 24, 2006

Steering Committee Meeting #3  
Dowagiac Conservation Club (Dowagiac)

April 25, 2006

Presentation to Historic Museum Society

April 28 – May 5, 2006

Student Survey Week

July 19, 2006

Park Assessment Tour

August 7, 2006

Steering Committee Meeting #4 at the Parks Department/Cass County Road Commission (Cassopolis)

September 15

Presentation to Park Board, Scott Wyman

September 18 – October 18, 2006

Public Comment Period

October 19 and November 2, 2006

Public Hearings

November 2, 2006

Adoption by County Board of Commissioners

November 16, 2006

Adoption by Cass County Road Commission



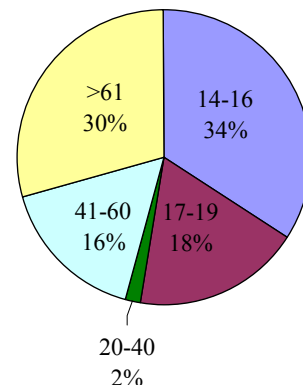
## Public Input Process

Acknowledging the importance of developing a joint park, recreation, open space, and greenway plan that is endorsed and supported by residents of the community, the steering committee made a dedicated effort to seek input by inviting public participation in a number of ways.

Prior to the public visioning session held April 17, 2006, notices were sent to local newspapers with subscribers in Cass County. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, the Cass County Conservation District, and the Cass County Parks Department also posted notices and a printable survey on their websites.

The public visioning session was held at the Cass Council on Aging in Cassopolis. Participants were divided into two groups with alternating activities designed to stimulate ideas and conversation. The activities included responding to a parks and recreation needs survey, a video presentation highlighting the Cass County Parks, a quiz testing participants' knowledge of the parks, and a PowerPoint presentation demonstrating different aspects of the parks' amenities and possible future amenities. After each group had participated in the activities, the groups were brought together to discuss the current conditions of the parks and to develop a shared vision of the parks' future.<sup>29</sup>

**Age Groups of Survey Respondents**



The park survey was distributed to high schools in every school district in Cass County with the request for the student councils to use the survey as part of a government participation activity. The survey was also presented to the Conservation District group.<sup>30</sup> There were a total of 105 completed surveys. The pie chart above demonstrates the percentage of all participants by age group.

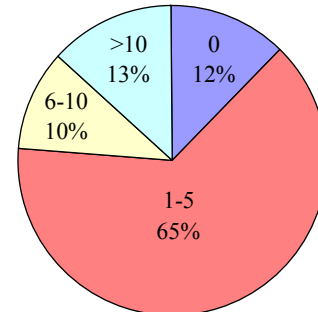
There was a good representation from almost all of municipalities in the county. The tally of residents per municipality can be found in the Appendix.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix

The estimated number of annual visits to the county parks is demonstrated by the pie chart to the right. Only thirteen percent of the respondents visited the parks more than ten times per year. The majority of surveyed respondents (65%) indicated they visited the parks between one and five times per year.

Number of Annual Visits to the Parks



The survey asked each respondent to select six activities that they already enjoyed doing or would like to do in the future. The table below lists recreational activity by number of “votes” received.

The overall top ten are highlighted. As indicated, three separate groups responded to the survey. The results per group are available in the Appendix.

#### Recreational Activity Most Enjoyed

<b>1. Hiking trails</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>2. Canoeing/kayaking</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>3. Picnic Areas</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4. Swimming</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>5. Concerts</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6. Bike trails</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>7. Open Space</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>8. Fishing</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>9. Nature watching</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>10. Sports</b>	<b>25</b>
Festivals	24
Natural Resource Preservation	21
Ice Skating	20
Nature Center	17
Family Activities	17
Nature Centers	17
Boating	17

#### (Continued)

Horse trails	16
Arts & Crafts	16
Snowmobiling	15
Outdoor Education	12
Playgrounds	10
Youth Activities	10
Paved trails in woods	10
Cultural/Heritage Preservation	10
Interpretive Programs	8
Cross-Country Skiing	8
Winter Sports	6
Barrier-free facilities	4
Pre-school age programs	2
Advanced bike trails	1

**Public Review and Comment**

The draft plan was available in several locations for a thirty-day (September 18 - October 18, 2006) public comment period. Announcements were published in the local newspapers, municipal newsletters, and the draft plan was available on the websites of Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, Cass County Conservation District, and Cass County Parks.<sup>31</sup>

Following the thirty-day public comment period, a formal public hearing was announced and held October 19 and November 2, 2006. The plan was adopted by the Cass County Board of Commissioners immediately following the November 2 hearing.

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<sup>31</sup> See Appendix for notice and locations

## Goal Development

The purpose of the Cass County Parks Department shall be to plan, acquire, develop, preserve, administer, maintain and operate a system of community parks, recreation, open spaces and greenways in Cass County. The fundamental long range goal of the parks and open space program is to acquire and develop sites in an orderly and systematic method for recreation and conservation purposes. Proposed open space and/or recreation sites will serve a secondary but important function in the preservation of unique natural areas and in the development of overall county growth patterns to ensure the enhancement of a quality living environment.<sup>32</sup> When determining project priorities, the following objectives will be considered:

### *Will the project...*

- Be constructed, operated, and maintained in a manner that will provide the greatest recreation opportunity for the least per capita cost
- Meet the need to preserve areas of ecological, historical or aesthetic significance and plan for the maximum use of recycling and sound ecological measures
- Help shape future county development in a desirable pattern
- Serve multiple interests and population groups by improving the availability and accessibility of support facilities such as parking, telephone, water, restrooms, and lighting
- Have multi-use characteristics and multi-season capabilities
- Strike a balance between active and passive recreation open space
- Serve an area of the county with the highest population density, low income, or one with insufficient recreation facilities

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<sup>32</sup> Previous plan 2001-2005(Paraphrased)

## FIVE-YEAR PLAN

### Goals

The following summary and corresponding five-year action plan were developed by Cass County administrators, the Parks and Recreation Department, steering committee members, and stakeholder groups as they work together to fulfill the recreational goals as developed.

*GOAL 1 Establish stable and secure funding to improve and maintain county parks and recreation programs.*

County administrators and residents will be asked to support consistent and adequate funding for the county parks. Staff will work with volunteer organizations such as the Park Advisory, Friends of the Parks, scouting organizations, and others to increase membership and fundraising events. Efforts will be made to maximize supportive resources such as time and energy, monetary donations, real property, and physical and intellectual talents. Increased efforts will be made to seek and apply for funding opportunities on the local, state, and federal levels.

*GOAL 2 Create and implement a marketing campaign to promote Cass County as a recreation destination for residents and visitors.*

Through careful consideration of Cass County's available amenities and through research of popular recreational and leisure pursuits, develop a marketing strategy to attract residents and visitors to the parks. The marketing strategy will include further development of the Park and Recreation Department's website and other promotional materials designed to highlight the attractions and increase facility usage.

*GOAL 3 Provide barrier-free accessibility to existing and future facilities.*

After a thorough assessment of existing facilities, suggested improvements have been made for each park in the five-year action plan. Barrier-free design features will be incorporated into future park development projects.



*GOAL 4 Develop and support policies that will preserve and protect valuable water and land resources.*

The residents of Cass County have indicated that the preservation and enjoyment of wildlife in its natural state is highly desired. In response, opportunities to acquire land will be sought for the purpose of preservation whenever possible. Park preservation and protection policies will be established to encourage responsible use of natural resources through good example. The county and local municipalities will be encouraged to adopt land use policies that will enhance the protection of natural features, land, and water quality.

Current successful educational programs (Fifth grade conservation day tour) will continue to promote land conservation for the protection of high quality natural areas. Further educational opportunities designed to promote land conservation, including farmland preservation, for the protection of high quality natural areas in the county will also be sought and developed when possible.

*GOAL 5 Support and promote policies that will preserve and protect properties with historic and/or cultural value.*

Cooperate with the efforts of the Cass County Historical Society, and request assistance from other organizations such as Southwest Michigan College, and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, to research and identify properties with historic and/or cultural value. Develop and promote activities and policies that will preserve and protect identified properties as well as support efforts to provide rehabilitation and enhancement where needed.

*GOAL 6 Seek and establish connections between existing and future trails and pathways including greenways and blueways.<sup>33</sup>*

Develop a marketing strategy to promote the need for increasing desirable trailways which will include paved and unpaved hiking and biking trails, non-motorized trails, waterways and open space greenways. Promote the increased health and economic benefits derived from the availability of enhanced and interconnected trail resources.

Work with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, Cass County Information Systems, and other similar groups to develop maps indicating existing trailways and potential locations for linkages. Develop a prioritized systematic approach for the acquisition and development of properties that will directly connect existing trailways. Work with county departments to develop policies to promote the inclusion of bike trails (non-motorized?) as part of road projects. Pursue regional cooperative opportunities with groups such as Michiana Regional Greenways for connecting trailways with neighboring municipalities in Michigan and Indiana. (See Greenways Trail map)

*GOAL 7 Respond to changing demographics when planning future recreational facilities and programs.*

Maintain awareness of population growth areas and seek to understand the changes in different age groups, conditions of health and disabilities, socio-economic indicators, or other significant population changes which may have an impact on recreational programs and facilities. By seeking community support and input, define, plan, and develop projects that will meet the needs and desires of the changing demographics.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.sicparks.org/greenways/index.html>

*GOAL 8 Enhance the positive working relationship with all units of government within Cass County, including the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, to maximize the benefits of coordinated programs and facilities.*

Through partnerships with the Pokagon Band, educational programs could be established to increase knowledge and respect for the rich cultural history of Cass County's first inhabitants. Seek intergovernmental cooperation to establish coordinated efforts for the protection and enhancement of natural resources and natural recreation areas. Seek input and cooperation for the identification and preservation of sites and properties that have historic and cultural value and promote rehabilitation and enhancement where needed.

*GOAL 9 Develop a project plan in response to identified needs of Cass County residents.*

From previous recreation plans, community surveys, and through current information gathered from the residents of Cass County, specific projects and areas of improvement have been proposed and are under consideration. The plan for those projects is in the next chapter "Five-Year Action Plan".

**Action Plan**

*Which projects will be done?* Project ideas are sometimes referred to as *immediate needs*, *future needs*, or *hopeful wishes*. A five-year action plan functions as a guide to sort through and understand project priorities, identify cost and time requirements, establish accountability, and to set benchmarks for recognizing successful completion.

This action plan was developed through research and site visit reports, public visioning and survey response assessment and through the collaborative efforts of the steering committee, Parks Department staff, SWMC staff, and Cass County administration.

The action plan is organized by park - each with its own project matrix. The last page of the plan describes projects that are not within park boundaries.

**Legend:** Priority levels are 1-5. Number 1 represents the highest priority – Number 5, the lowest.  
 CCPD = Cass County Parks Department  
 CCRC = Cass County Road Commission

**Name of Park:** *Arthur Dodd Memorial Park*

<b>Description of project</b>	<b>Time to Complete</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>	<b>Priority</b>
1. Purchase park from DNR	6 months	<\$300,000	County	1
2. Build bridge	6 months	<\$100,000	CCPD	1
3. Expand parking area	1 year	<\$60,000	CCPD	1
4. New bathrooms	2 years	\$80,000	CCPD	2
5. Add benches along trails	1 year	\$5,000	CCPD	3
6. Additional (new?) play equipment	3 years	\$40,000	CCPD	2
7. Provide access to the water for canoe/kayak users	1 year	\$20,000	CCPD	2
8. Educational Nature Center (focus on wetland/aquatic life)	4 years	\$750,000	CCPD	3

**Name of Park:** *Veteran's Memorial*

<b>Description of project</b>	<b>Time to Complete</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>	<b>Priority</b>
1. Redo tuck pointing (Flag base repair)	6 months	\$5,000	Volunteers <sup>34</sup>	1
2. Provide barrier free access (sidewalk)	2 years	\$30,000	CCRC	2

**Name of Park:** *Beeson Street*

<b>Description of project</b>	<b>Time to Complete</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>	<b>Priority</b>
1. Landscaping	1 year	\$2,000	CCRC	2
2. Gravel parking area	3 months	<\$5,000	CCRC	1
3. Picnic tables	6 months	<\$2,000	CCRC	2

<sup>34</sup> Garden clubs, Eagle Scouts, 4-H club, FFA, Master Gardeners

**Name of Park: Russ Forest**

<i>Description of project</i>	<i>Time to Complete</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Responsible Entity</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1. Complete the parking lot	1 year	\$20,000	CCPD	1
2. Develop equestrian trails and facilities	2 years	\$10,000	CCPD Volunteers	1
3. Bridge	1 year	\$50,000	CCPD	2
4. Play equipment	6 months	\$40,000	CCPD	1
5. Signage for trails	6 months	\$5,000	CCPD	3

**Name of Park: T.K. Lawless**

<i>Description of project</i>	<i>Time to Complete</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Responsible Entity</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1. New trail maps and trail signage	1 year	\$10,000	CCPD	2
2. Building for storage/equipment/maintenance/indoor education	2 years	\$100,000	CCPD	1
3. Fishing deck	1 year	\$20,000	Eagle Scouts	3
4. Equestrian trails	3 years	\$75,000	CCPD Volunteers	2
5. Perimeter trail (10' wide)	3 years	\$75,000	CCPD Volunteers	2
6. Dog Park	1 year	\$50,000	CCPD	1
7. Concerts in the Park	1 year	\$20,000	CCPD	3
8. Blueway connector	3 years	\$30,000	CCPD	2
9. Finish electrical work in the campground	6 months	\$30,000	CCPD	2
10. Nature Center	4 years	<\$1,000,000	CCPD	1
11. New entrance to the parking area (Walnut & Monkey Run)	2 years	\$200,000	CCRC	2
12. Full-time attendant	2 months	\$45,000	CCPD	1
13. Store/equipment rental (Frisbees, etc)	6 months	\$20,000	CCPD	1

**Name of Park: Stevens Lakeside Memorial**

<i>Description of project</i>	<i>Time to Complete</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Responsible Entity</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1. New Play Equipment	8 months	\$40,000	CCRC	1
2. Additional Parking Area	2 years	\$200,000	CCRC	2



**Name of Park: *Harmon East – Swimming Access***

<b><i>Description of project</i></b>	<b><i>Time to Complete</i></b>	<b><i>Estimated Cost</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Entity</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>
1. Covered Bench or Shelter	<i>1 year</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>2</i>
2. Extend Beach	<i>6 months</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>1</i>
3. New Signage	<i>8 months</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>2</i>

**Name of Park: *Harmon West – Boat Launch***

<b><i>Description of project</i></b>	<b><i>Time to Complete</i></b>	<b><i>Estimated Cost</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Entity</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>
1. Pave Parking Area	<i>1 year</i>	<i>\$35,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>1</i>
2. New Boat Ramp	<i>2 years</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>	<i>CCPD State of MI</i>	<i>1</i>
3. New Signage	<i>8 months</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>2</i>

**Name of Park: *Henry Sears – Boat Launch***

<b><i>Description of project</i></b>	<b><i>Time to Complete</i></b>	<b><i>Estimated Cost</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Entity</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>
1. Increase Parking Area	<i>1 year</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>	<i>CCRC</i>	<i>1</i>
2. New Signage	<i>8 months</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>2</i>
3. Re-Pave Parking Area	<i>6 months</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>CCRC</i>	<i>1</i>

**Other Projects**

<b><i>Description of Project</i></b>	<b><i>Time to Complete</i></b>	<b><i>Estimated Cost</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Entity</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>
1. Rails to Trails connection (Decatur Road to Vandalia – old Airline Railroad)	<i>2 years</i>	<i>\$200,000</i>	<i>CCPD Village of Vandalia Penn Twp</i>	<i>1</i>
2. Transmission line easement (M-60 to Three Rivers-Silver Creek-Dowagiac-Indian Lake area)	<i>4 years</i>	<i>&lt;\$500,000</i>	<i>CCPD Dowagiac Silver Creek</i>	<i>1</i>
3. “Get Wet” Area	<i>2 years</i>	<i>&lt;\$200,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>1</i>
4. Beach (County)	<i>3 years</i>	<i>&lt;\$400,000</i>	<i>CCPD</i>	<i>1</i>

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## **APPENDIX**

## Cass County Recreational Facilities by Municipality – 2006

Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming
Calvin Township																																	
Chain Lake DNR Access	State	1	N	X											X										X	X	X						
Owens Landing	Private	1	Y	X											X										X	X	X						
Paradise Lake DNR Access	State	1	N	X											X										X	X	X						
William Robinson Comm. Center	County	5	N		X	X	X							X									X						X	X	X	X	
Village of Cassopolis																																	
Clispy Park	City	2.24			X	X																							X	X	X		
Don Horne Park	City	34.69		X	X	X								X									X	X					X	X	X		
Log Cabin	City	0.4			X									X											X								
Sam Adams Middle School		0.3				X																							X				
Squires Elementary		2				X																							X				
Southside Park	City	0.5			X	X																							X		X		
City of Dowagiac																																	
Apex Sports Complex	City	4	N			X																											
Burke Park	City	1.5	N																														
Elks Golf/Restaurant	Private	62.7	Y																														
Farr Park	City	1.1	N																														
Patrick Hamilton Elementary	City	5	N			X																								X			
J. Gage Elementary	City	3	N			X																								X			
James E. Heddon Park	City	3.5	N	X											X										X	X					X		
Lincoln Community Center	City	2.5	N																										X				
McKinley Elementary	City	3	N			X																							X				
Northwest Park	City	5.5	N			X									X																		
Optimist Park	City	4	N			X																			X				X	X		X	

Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming
Rotary Park	City	10	N	X		X		X						X															X	X			
Rudolphi Wildlife Refuge	City	155	N					X													X												
Rudy Park	City		N																														
Russom Field	City	5	N	X		X									X																		
Southwestern Michigan College	Private	85	N	X		X	X							X						X	X											X	
Union High School	City	19	N			X																											
Walter Ward Park	City	3	N	X		X															X								X	X	X		
Water Tower Park	City	5	N	X		X									X														X	X	X		
Wesley House	Private	0.5	N	X	X	X	X																										
Village of Edwardsburg																																	
Eagle Lake Elementary		4			X	X																							X				
Edwardsburg Primary School		0.5			X	X																							X				
Gunn Park		1				X									X										X				X	X			
Leo Hoffman Field		10			X	X								X																		X	
Howard Township																																	
Hatcher Park	Township	1.2			X																								X	X	X		
Jones Park	Township	10			X	X																							X	X	X		
Kiddie Corral	Township	0.06			X	X																							X	X			
Memorial Park	Township	1.1			X																												
Pepper Martin Park	Township	10			X	X		X	X		X			X									X	X					X	X	X		
Shotly Park	Township	2			X										X								X	X					X	X	X		
Jefferson Township																																	
Conservation Club						X																											
Red Brick School					X	X	X							X															X			X	
LaGrange Township																																	
Beeson State Park	County	0.2	N			X																								X			

Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming
Diamond Lake DNR Access	State	1	Y	X	X																												
Diamond Lake Marina	Private	0.5	NA	X	X																												
Diamond Lake Park	Private	0.5	NA		X																												X
Diamond Lake Yacht Club	Private	0.5	Y	X																	X			X		X				X		X	
Howell Point Boat Landing	Private	0.5	NA																														
Park Shore Golf Course	Private	30	Y	X	X																												
Park Shore Marina	Private	1	N	X	X																												
Point Park	County	0.5	N	X											X										X		X			X			
Ross Beaty High School	Public	20	N	X	X																												
Rudolphi Wildlife Refuge	Public		N					X	X	X					X																		
Southwestern Michigan College	Public		Y	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X							X									X			
Stone Lake Boat Rental	Private	0.5	Y																														
Stone Lake DNR Access	State	0.5	N		X																												
Veterans Memorial Park	County	2	N																														
Marcellus Township																																	
Beech Grove Campground	Private	15	Y			X						X	X	X			X						X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Big Fish Lake DNR Access	State	1.5	N	X										X											X	X	X	X	X				
Covered Bridge Campground	Private	3	Y	X																			X		X	X		X					
Cranberry Campground	Private	5	Y	X											X										X	X		X					
Golf Lake Boat Launch	Private	0.5	Y	X																					X	X		X					
Hemlock Lake Campground	Private	20	Y	X		X		X				X		X		X							X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Hemlock Lake DNR Access	State	1.5	N	X								X		X		X									X	X	X	X	X		X		
Hycke Boat Launch	Private	0.5	Y	X																					X	X		X					
Marcellus Schools	Village	60	N		X	X																		X					X			X	
Melvilles Campground	Private	50	Y	X		X		X							X									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Wakelee Church	Private	0.5	N		X	X								X																			

Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming
Village of Marcellus																																	
Hudson Memorial Building	Village	0.2	Y	X	X		X							X																			
Marcellus Elementary School	Village	5	N	X	X	X	X							X															X				
Marcellus High School	Village	20	N	X	X	X	X							X																		X	
Marcellus Middle School	Village	3	N	X	X	X	X							X															X			X	
Lion's Park	Village	0.2	N																										X				
Woodland Courts	Village	0.5	N			X																											
Mason Township																																	
Juno Lake	Public														X											X	X	X					
Mason Baptist Church	Private																													X			
Mason Township Hall	Public													X															X	X			
Milton Township																																	
First Missionary Church	Private	5				X																							X				
Niles Tri-County Head Start	Private	1		X	X		X							X															X				
Spaulding Lake Camp	Private	10	Y	X	X	X						X	X	X		X							X	X	X		X			X		X	
Trinity United Methodist Church	Private	10			X																								X				
Newberg Township																																	
Camelot Campground	Private		Y	X								X		X											X	X			X				
Driskels Lake	State			X											X										X	X							
Kirk Lake	State			X													X								X	X							
M-40 Racetrack	Private					X						X	X	X																		X	
Orane Pond	State							X									X																
Poe's Church	Private					X																											
Rockies Campground	Private		Y	X								X		X											X	X							
Rodger Campground	Private		Y	X								X		X		X									X	X							
Snow Trails						X																											

Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming	
Stady Campground	Private		Y	X								X		X											X	X								
State Lake	State			X				X									X																	
Steil Campground	Private		Y	X								X		X											X	X								
Bogart Lake	Public			X																						X								
Forked Lake	Public			X																						X								
Harwood Lake	Public			X											X											X								
Dr. T.K. Lawless Park																																		
Swiss Valley	Private					X								X						X												X		
Ontwa Township																																		
Adamsville Bridge	Public																									X	X	X						
Adamsville Church	Private																												X					
Eagle Lake	Public																									X	X	X						
Edwardsburg School						X	X							X															X					
Four Lakes Country Club	Private		Y	X										X				X															X	
Garver Lake	Public			X																					X	X	X	X						
Garver Lake Golf	W. Leist		Y																														X	
Gunn Park	Public																												X	X				
Kraus Park	Public																												X	X				
Library Park	Public																													X				
Lindburg Park	Public																								X		X							
Pentecostal Church	Private																												X					
Penn Township																																		
Belas Lake	State		N	X													X									X	X	X						
Diamond Lake	State		Y	X	X																					X	X	X						
State Land	State		N	X	X		X										X									X	X	X						
Vandalia Ballfield	Village		N			X																												



Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming	
Vandalia Tennis Court	Village		N			X																			X				X	X	X			
Pokagon Township																																		
A. Dodd Memorial Roadside Park	State/County	52	N	X	X	X		X	X						X							X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X
Crystal Springs UMCC	Private	40	Y	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Dowagiac River DNR Access	State	0.1	N																						X	X		X						X
Dowagiac Woods (Michigan Nature Association)	Private		N					X		X	X														X			X						
Hampshire Golf Course	Private		Y	X	X																												X	
L. Smith Boat Rental and Launch	Private	2	Y																						X	X		X						
Old Rugged Cross Memorial Garden	Township	1	N		X																										X			
Old Tavern Inn Event Area	Private	1.5	N		X									X										X	X					X	X	X		
Pokagon Twp. Hall	Township	2	N			X																												
Porter Township																																		
Baldwin Prairie School	Private	0.1	N		X	X	X							X																X		X	X	
Camp Bellowood	Private	0.34	Y	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X								X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Cass County Shriner Club	Private	0.5	Y		X	X								X																		X		
Conservation Club	Private	4	Y											X																		X		
Hollywood Shores Camp	Private	15	Y	X		X		X				X	X	X		X									X	X	X		X	X				X
Some Place To Shoot	Private	15	Y		X	X	X							X																				
Sunset Park	County	0.5	N	X																					X	X		X						
Bair Lake Bible Camp	Private	100	Y	X	X	X	X	X					X	X								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Birch Lake Yacht Club	Private	0.5	Y	X																					X	X		X						
Camp Friendenwold	Private	300	Y	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Camp Tannadonah	Private	0.47	Y	X		X	X	X			X		X	X										X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
East Harmon Park	County	0.5	N	X	X										X										X		X	X		X				X
Lake Park	County	0.5	N																						X		X	X						

Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming
Lakeside Campgground	Private	2	Y	X		X		X				X	X		X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Mirror Valley Retreat	Private		Y	X	X	X	X	X	X																								
Sears Park	County	0.5	N	X	X																				X	X	X	X					
West Harmon Park	County	0.5	N	X	X																				X	X	X	X					
Wood Lake Campground	Private	500	Y	X	X	X		X			X		X	X	X							X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Silver Creek Township																																	
Dewey Lake DNR Access	State	0.5	N	X											X										X	X	X	X					
Fitch Camp	Private	20	Y	X	X	X		X						X	X								X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indian Lake Golf Course	Private	30	Y		X	X								X				X													X	X	
Magician Lake DNR Access	State	1	N	X											X										X	X	X	X					
Maple Island Park	Private	1.5	N			X																											
Rainbow Park	Private	0.33	N	X																					X		X	X			X		X
Shady Shores Resort Beach	Private	0.25	Y	X		X							X	X										X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Hassle Field	Private	3	N			X								X	X																		
Vandalia Village																																	
Volinia Township																																	
Eva Stevens Memorial Park	County	2		X		X									X										X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Newton Home	County	2		X	X																												
Rolling Hills Bird Farm	Private	100	Y			X								X			X														X		
Russ Forest	County	10		X	X	X		X	X	X					X		X				X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X		
Volinia Outcome School	Public	10			X	X								X										X					X				
Wayne Township																																	
Cook Lake Fen Preserve (Southwest MI Land Conservancy)	Private	11.7	N																														
Dowagiac Canoe Rental	Private	2	Y	X											X										X			X					
Dowagiac Conservation Club	Private	45		X	X	X								X									X		X			X	X			X	

Municipality/Facility	Ownership	Size (Acres)	Fee	Water	ADA Accessible	Outdoor Sports	Indoor Sports	Hiking Trails	Biking Trails	Equestrian Trails	Fitness Trails	Public Camping	Group Camping	Modern Restrooms	Primitive Restrooms	Dump Stations	Public Hunting	Ball Golf	Disc Golf	Downhill Skiing	Cross-Country Skiing	Sledding	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Fishing	Boat Launch	Water Sports	Canoeing	Playground	Picnicking	Shelter/Pavilion	Public Phone	Swimming
Kincheloe Elementary	Public	2			X																								X				
South Twin Lake Public Access	Private	0.5																						X	X	X							
TOTALS				75	59	73	19	23	8	4	5	14	12	50	30	8	8	2	0	2	11	4	18	19	58	46	35	39	56	41	32	28	16

**Survey Results****Combined Survey Results**

There were 105 respondents between the three groups. *(Individual Survey Group Results Follow)*

**Recreational Activity Most Enjoyed**

<b>1. Hiking trails</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>2. Canoeing/kayaking</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>3. Picnic Areas</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4. Swimming</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>5. Concerts</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>6. Bike trails</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>7. Open Space</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>8. Fishing</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>9. Nature watching</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>10. Sports</b>	<b>25</b>
Festivals	24
Natural Resource Preservation	21
Ice Skating	20
Nature Center	17
Family Activities	17
Nature Centers	17
Boating	17
Horse trails	16
Arts & Crafts	16
Snowmobiling	15
Outdoor Education	12
Playgrounds	10
Youth Activities	10
Paved trails in woods	10
Cultural/Heritage Preservation	10
Interpretive Programs	8
Cross-Country Skiing	8
Winter Sports	6
Barrier-free facilities	4
Pre-school age programs	2
Advanced bike trails	1

<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	
Calvin Township	3
Marcellus Village	2
Penn Township	4
LaGrange Township/Village of Cassopolis	8
Howard Township	3
Pokagon Township	6
Jefferson Township	3
Silver Creek Township	3
Wayne Township	1
Porter Township	1
Ontwa Township	6
City of Dowagiac	2
Mason Township	4
Jones	1
Volinia Township	1
Wayne Township	2
Newberg Township	1
Milton Township	2
City of Niles	5
Village of Vandalia	2
Village of Edwardsburg	45
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>105</b>

<b>Age of Respondent</b>	
14-16	36
17-19	19
20-40	2
41-60	17
>61	31

<b>Number of Annual Visits to the Parks</b>	
0	13
1-5	67
6-10	11
>10	14

**Cass County Parks**  
**Public Visioning Session - April 17, 2006**  
*Survey Results*

<b>Resident Municipality</b>	
Pokagon Township	6
Penn Township	3
Village of Cassopolis	3
Howard Township	3
Jefferson Township	3
Silver Creek Township	3
Ontwa Township	3
Calvin Township	2
Marcellus Village	2
City of Dowagiac	2
Mason Township	2
Wayne Township	1
Porter Township	1
Village of Jones	1
Volinia Township	1
Wayne Township	1
Newberg Township	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>38</b>

<b>Age Group</b>	
>61	18
41-60	17
19-40	2
<18	1

<b>Yearly Park Visits</b>	
1-5	23
>10	8
6-10	5
0	2

<b>Activities of Importance</b>	
Hiking TRAILS	22
Nature watching	18
Canoeing/kayaking	15
Picnic Areas	14
Natural Resource Preservation	14
Fishing	12
Open Space	12
Nature Center	12
Bike TRAILS	10
Playgrounds	8
Family Activities	8
Paved TRAILS in woods	7
Youth Activities	6
Interpretive Programs	6
Horse TRAILS	5
Concerts	5
Cultural/Heritage Preservation	5
Nature Centers	5
Outdoor Education	5
Swimming	4
Winter Sports	4
Arts & Crafts	3
Cross-Country Skiing	3
Sports	2
Festivals	2
Pre-school age programs	2
Snowmobiling	1
Advanced bike TRAILS	1
Barrier-free facilities	1

## COMMENTS

### Dog Park

Would love to have an off-leash dog park and would be willing to pay a reasonable membership fee for it.

Dog Park in the village and at Lawless.

Doggie Park.

### Financial

We need to pass a millage to fund and maintain the parks.

I hope we can maintain what we have.

Keep the parks in good condition and affordable.

Cass County Parks does an excellent job with the resources (\$) and (Natural/Cultural) that it has.

Must develop revenue producing activities! This is most important!



Trails

I would like to preserve the TRAILS for nature watching and photography.

More bike TRAILS.

Bike TRAILS connecting cities and destinations.

Paved bike TRAILS – but not necessarily in the woods.

Clear TRAILS maps and markings.

More benches around the hiking TRAILS.

County-wide bike TRAILS

Multi-use TRAILS

Exercise TRAILS at Lawless Park

More horse TRAILS

Development of complete TRAILS system for hiking, horses, bikes

Paths in the woods need to stay maintained

Would like to see bike TRAILS along roadways – not cross country – but for road or mixed bikes. Something going from point A to B (around a scenic route and back by another path)

Something toward Silver Creek Township and their multitude of lakes and orchards

Water Related

Fishing decks for family fishing would be nice for those who can't afford to live on a lake.

Ease of access to lakes at Lawless.

More access to swimming, perhaps even a swimming pool.

Swimming pool

Easy water access

Facility Enhancement

More playground equipment.

More picnic tables.

Rest area, benches, etc. for short-winded seniors.

Golf practice facility.

A lodge for families to stay for a few days or a week.

More playgrounds.

Family

Aim towards family life, church activities.

Outdoor educational family activities (bird watching identifying trees, etc.).

Family activities are essential.

Nature/Natural Resources

I see parks/NATURE areas as places to protect, learn from, enhance, keep in tact for future generations. Games, sports, biking, etc. are important healthful outdoor activities, but I believe they should not overrun the NATURAL features of the land space and its NATURAL features – water, etc. Also concerned with the use of pesticides in the parks – hope it does not occur.

Species identification – trees, flowers, etc.

Organized NATURE walks with knowledgeable leaders including night star-walks.

A NATURE center that works with the school systems, college, COA, that also teaches crafts, music, folk art.

Work with the DNR is very good because the wildlife does not go into the City and Villages.

A balance needs to be in place between human development/intrusion and the needs of local wildlife habitat.

Keep NATURAL environment and wildlife.

Turn the land at the County Farm (Med Care Facility) into a park to protect the precious well-head from contamination from chemical farming or development.

Sensitive land “set aside” for NATURE preserve for the benefit of future generations.

As the county grows – it will be important for the parks to focus on being a steward of our NATURAL and cultural resources and interpreting that heritage to its visitors/residents.

(NATURE Center/interpretive programs).

Miscellaneous

Advertise the parks better.

You (Cass County) are doing a fine job now.

Do not commercialize.

Two major sports areas large enough to attract major events and tournaments.

A special concert area where the citizens can gather to meet and enjoy.

A group of Edwardsburg area people have formed a not-for-profit Edwardsburg Sports Complex, inc. to build a sports complex for Little League, Soccer, and Rocket Football to start. Walking/biking TRAILS, playground area, indoor complex for swimming, ice skating, in the future. We are interested in working with the parks department to make this happen.

**Cass County Parks  
Cass County Conservation Society  
Survey Results**

<b>Resident Municipality</b>	
LaGrange Township	4
Penn Township	1
Milton Township	1
Ontwa Township	1
Mason Township	1
Calvin Township	1
Village of Edwardsburg	1
City of Niles	2
Wayne Township	1
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>Age Group</b>	
>61	13
41-60	
19-40	
<18	

<b>Yearly Park Visits</b>	
1-5	11
>10	
6-10	2
0	

<b>Activities of Importance</b>	
Nature Centers	10
Hiking TRAILS	9
Picnic Areas	8
Nature watching	6
Natural Resource Preservation	5
Family Activities	4
Outdoor Education	4
Canoeing/kayaking	3
Open Space	3
Paved TRAILS in woods	3
Sports	3
Fishing	2
Bike TRAILS	2
Playgrounds	2
Cultural/Heritage Preservation	2
Winter Sports	2
Cross-Country Skiing	2
Barrier-free facilities	2
Youth Activities	1
Interpretive Programs	1
Horse TRAILS	1
Concerts	1
Arts & Crafts	1
Festivals	1
Swimming	0
Pre-school age programs	0
Snowmobiling	0
Advanced bike TRAILS	0

**COMMENTS**

Horse shoes, mushroom hunting, archery target range, trap shooting range, a section of a park devoted to Native American cultural experiences such as a teepee, talking circle, sweat lodge, native drum demonstrations, native crafts, dance lessons, etc.

### Edwardsburg High School Student Survey – May 2006

<b>Resident Municipality</b>	
Cassopolis	1
Mason	1
Milton Twp	1
Ontwa Twp	2
Niles	3
Vandalia	2
Edwardsburg	44
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>54</b>

<b>Age Group</b>	
<13	0
14-16	36
17-19	18
>20	0

<b>Yearly Park Visits</b>	
0	11
1-5	33
6-10	6
>10	4

#### Choose your favorite six:

Swimming	35
Canoeing	29
Concerts	29
Picnic Areas	24
Bike trails	22
Festivals	21
Sports	20
Ice Skating	20
Hiking trails	17
Boating	17
Snowmobiling	14
Open Space	13
Fishing	12
Arts & Crafts	12
Horseback	10
Nature Center	7
Family	5
Outdoor Education	3
Cultural/Heritage	3
Organized Activities for Youth	3
Cross-Country Skiing	3
Nature Watching	2
Natural Resource Preservation	2
Barrier-free	1
Interpretive programs	1

**Recommended Classification System<sup>35</sup>**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>General Description</b>	<b>Location Criteria</b>	<b>Size Criteria</b>
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2500 sq. ft. and one acre in size.
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼- to ½-mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.
School-Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable-depends on function.
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3 mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.
Large Urban Park	Large urban parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.
Natural Resource Areas	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
Greenways	Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community.	Strategically located communitywide facilities.	Determined by projected demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal.

<sup>35</sup> 21 IC1924 (Rev. 01/27/2006) Appendix C of DNR Guidelines

Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single- purpose use.	Variable-dependent on specific use.	Variable.
Private Park/ Recreation Facility	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable-dependent on specific use.	Variable.

Classification	General Description	Description of each type
Park Trail	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists / in-line skaters. Type II: Multipurpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians and bicyclists/in-line skaters. Type III: Nature trails for pedestrians. May be hard- or soft-surfaced.
Connector Trails	Multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists / in-line skaters located in independent r.o.w. (e.g., old railroad r.o.w.). Type II: Separate/single-purpose hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters. Typically located within road r.o.w.
On-Street Bikeways	Paved segments of roadways that serve as a means to safely separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic.	Bike Route: Designated portions of the roadway for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Bike Lane: Shared portions of the roadway that provide separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists, such as paved shoulders.
All-Terrain Bike Trail	Off-road trail for all-terrain (mountain) bikes.	Single-purpose loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas.
Cross-Country Ski Trail	Trails developed for traditional and skate-style cross country skiing.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas
Equestrian Trail	Trails developed for horseback riding.	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas. Sometimes developed as multipurpose with hiking and all terrain biking where conflicts can be controlled.

*Adapted From: Lancaster, R. A., Ed. Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, 1983. Mertes, J. D. and J. R. Hall. Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, 1995.*

## Natural Features Inventory<sup>36</sup>

### Key:

State Status: E = endangered, T = threatened, SC = special concern.  
 Federal Status: LE = listed endangered, LT = listed threatened, LELT = partly listed endangered and partly listed threatened, PDL = proposed de-listed, E(S/A) = endangered based on similarities/appearance, PS = partial status (federally listed in only part of its range), C = species being considered for federal status.

<b>Cass County Current as of 5/25/2006</b>			
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Federal Status</b>	<b>State Status</b>
<i>Acris crepitans blanchardi</i>	Blanchard's Cricket Frog		SC
<i>Agrimonia rostellata</i>	Beaked Agrimony		SC
<i>Amorpha canescens</i>	Leadplant		SC
<i>Androsace occidentalis</i>	Rock-jasmine		E
<i>Arabis missouriensis</i> var. <i>deamii</i>	Missouri Rock-cress		SC
<i>Aristida tuberculosa</i>	Beach Three-awned Grass		T
<i>Aristolochia serpentaria</i>	Virginia Snakeroot		T
<i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>	Purple Milkweed		SC
<i>Baptisia lactea</i>	White or Prairie False Indigo		SC
<i>Baptisia leucophaea</i>	Cream Wild Indigo		E
<i>Berula erecta</i>	Cut-leaved Water-parsnip		T
Bog			
<i>Cacalia plantaginea</i>	Prairie Indian-plantain		SC
<i>Calamagrostis stricta</i>	Narrow-leaved Reedgrass		T
<i>Calephelis mutica</i>	Swamp Metalmark		SC
<i>Carex grvida</i>	Sedge		X
<i>Carex lupuliformis</i>	False Hop Sedge		T
<i>Carex oligocarpa</i>	Eastern Few-fruited Sedge		T
<i>Castanea dentata</i>	American Chestnut		E
<i>Catocala dulciola</i>	Quiet Underwing		SC
<i>Catocala illecta</i>	Magdalen Underwing		SC
<i>Cirsium hillii</i>	Hill's Thistle		SC
<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	Spotted Turtle		T
<i>Clonophis kirtlandii</i>	Kirtland's Snake		E
Coastal plain marsh	Infertile Pond/marsh, Great Lakes Type		
<i>Coregonus artedii</i>	Cisco or Lake Herring		T
<i>Coreopsis palmata</i>	Prairie Coreopsis		T
<i>Corydalis flavula</i>	Yellow Fumewort		T
<i>Cuscuta glomerata</i>	Rope Dodder		SC
<i>Cyclonaias tuberculata</i>	Purple Wartyback		SC
<i>Cypripedium candidum</i>	White Lady-slipper		T
<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>	Cerulean Warbler		SC
<i>Dendroica discolor</i>	Prairie Warbler		E
<i>Digitaria filiformis</i>	Slender Finger-grass		X
<i>Discus patulus</i>	Domed Disc		SC
Dry-mesic southern forest			
<i>Dryopteris celsa</i>	Log Fern		T
<i>Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta</i>	Black Rat Snake		SC
<i>Eleocharis equisetoides</i>	Horsetail Spike-rush		SC
<i>Eleocharis melanocarpa</i>	Black-fruited Spike-rush		SC
Emergent marsh			
<i>Emys blandingii</i>	Blanding's Turtle		SC
<i>Erimyzon oblongus</i>	Creek Chubsucker		E

<sup>36</sup> <http://web4.msue.msu.edu/mnfi/>



Eryngium yuccifolium	Rattlesnake-master		T
Eupatorium sessilifolium	Upland Boneset		T
Filipendula rubra	Queen-of-the-prairie		T
Fimbristylis puberula	Chestnut Sedge		X
Fuirena squarrosa	Umbrella-grass		T
Fundulus dispar	Starhead Topminnow		SC
Galearis spectabilis	Showy Orchis		T
Gentiana flavida	White Gentian		E
Gentiana saponaria	Soapwort Gentian		X
Gentianella quinquefolia	Stiff Gentian		T
Geum virginianum	Pale Avens		SC
Gratiola virginiana	Round-fruited Hedge Hyssop		T
Great Blue Heron Rookery	Great Blue Heron Rookery		
Gymnocladus dioicus	Kentucky Coffee-tree		SC
Hardwood-conifer swamp			
Helianthus hirsutus	Whiskered Sunflower		SC
Helianthus mollis	Downy Sunflower		T
Hemicarpha micrantha	Dwarf-bulrush		SC
Heterocampa subrotata	Small Heterocampa		SC
Houstonia caerulea	blueets		SC
Hybanthus concolor	Green Violet		SC
Hydrastis canadensis	Goldenseal		T
Intermittent wetland	Infertile Pond/marsh, Great Lakes Type		
Inundated Shrub Swamp	Shrub Swamp, Central Midwest Type		
Kuhnia eupatorioides	False Boneset		SC
Lepisosteus oculatus	Spotted Gar		SC
Lespedeza procumbens	Trailing Bush-clover		X
Linum virginianum	Virginia Flax		T
Ludwigia alternifolia	Seedbox		SC
Lycopodium appressum	Northern Prostrate Clubmoss		SC
Lysimachia hybrida	Swamp Candles		SC
Meropleon ambifusca	Newman's Brocade		SC
Mesic Prairie	Tallgrass Prairie, Central Midwest Type		
Mesic southern forest	Rich Forest, Central Midwest Type		
Mesomphix cupreus	Copper Button		SC
Microtus ochrogaster	Prairie Vole		E
Morus rubra	Red Mulberry		T
Neonympha mitchellii mitchellii	Mitchell's Satyr	LE	E
Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta	Copperbelly Watersnake	LT	E
Notropis chalybaeus	Ironcolor Shiner		X
Oak barrens	Barrens, Central Midwest Type		
Oecanthus laricis	Tamarack Tree Cricket		SC
Panax quinquefolius	Ginseng		T
Panicum leibergii	Leiberg's Panic-grass		T
Panicum verrucosum	Warty Panic-grass		T
Papaipema cerina	Golden Borer		SC
Papaipema maritima	Maritime Sunflower Borer		SC
Papaipema sciata	Culvers Root Borer		SC
Papaipema silphii	Silphium Borer Moth		T
Papaipema speciosissima	Regal Fern Borer		SC
Philomycus carolinianus	Carolina Mantleslug		SC
Phlox maculata	Wild Sweet William or Spotted Phlox		T
Platanthera ciliaris	Orange or Yellow Fringed Orchid		T
Poa paludigena	Bog Bluegrass		T
Polemonium reptans	Jacob's Ladder or Greek-valerian		T
Polygala cruciata	Cross-leaved Milkwort		SC
Polygonum careyi	Carey's Smartweed		T
Polymnia uvedalia	Large-flowered Leafcup		T
Potamogeton bicupulatus	Waterthread Pondweed		T

Potamogeton pulcher	Spotted Pondweed		T
Prairie fen	Alkaline Shrub/herb Fen, Midwest Type		
Prosapia ignipectus	Red-legged Spittlebug		SC
Psilocarya scirpoides	Bald-rush		T
Pycnanthemum pilosum	Hairy Mountain-mint		T
Relict conifer swamp	Forested Bog, Central Midwest Type		
Rhexia virginica	Meadow-beauty		SC
Rhynchospora macrostachya	Tall Beak-rush		SC
Rotala ramosior	Tooth-cup		SC
Sabatia angularis	Rose-pink		T
Scleria pauciflora	Few-flowered Nut-rush		E
Scleria triglomerata	Tall Nut-rush		SC
Scutellaria elliptica	Hairy Skullcap		SC
Silene stellata	Starry Campion		T
Silphium integrifolium	Rosinweed		T
Silphium laciniatum	Compass-plant		T
Sistrurus catenatus catenatus	Eastern Massasauga	C	SC
Southern floodplain forest			
Southern swamp			
Southern wet meadow	Wet Meadow, Central Midwest Type		
Spartiniphaga inops	Spartina Moth		SC
Speyeria idalia	Regal Fritillary		E
Stellaria crassifolia	Fleshy Stitchwort		T
Tachopteryx thoreyi	Grey Petaltail		SC
Terrapene carolina carolina	Eastern Box Turtle		SC
Trillium recurvatum	Prairie Trillium		T
Trillium sessile	Toadshade		T
Triphora trianthophora	Three-birds Orchid		T
Valeriana edulis var. ciliata	Edible Valerian		T
Valerianella chenopodiifolia	Goosefoot Corn-salad		T
Viburnum prunifolium	Black Haw		SC
Viola pedatifida	Prairie Birdfoot Violet		T
Vitis vulpina	Frost Grape		T
Wet prairie	Wet Prairie, Midwest Type		
Wisteria frutescens	Wisteria		T
Woodland prairie	High Prairie, Midwest Type		
Zizania aquatica var. aquatica	Wild-rice		T

**Planning Process Documentation**

March 31, 2006	1 <sup>st</sup> Public Visioning Announcement
April 11, 2006	2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Visioning Announcement
September 15, 2006	Press Release for 30-day Public Review and Comment ( <i>With list of plan locations</i> )
September 18, 2006	Published legal notice for 30-day Public Review and Comment
October 12, 2006	Posted notice for Public Hearing
October 17, 2006	Published notice for 1 <sup>st</sup> Public Hearing
October 19, 2006	Minutes of 1 <sup>st</sup> Public Hearing
October 25, 2006	Published notice for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing
October 27, 2006	Regional Planning Agency Review ( <i>With response dated November 20</i> )
November 2, 2006	Minutes of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing with Official Motion to Approve
November 16, 2006	Cass County Road Commission Resolution of Adoption
November 27, 2006	County Planning Commission Notification of Plan