



Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission  
5045 Stanley Road • Flint, Michigan 48506

## Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan 2009 - 2013

Prepared for:

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

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**Appendix A**

- Overall Genesee County Parks and Recreation Boundary Map
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- Soils Map
- Buell Lake Park
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**Appendix B**

- Genesee County Parks and Recreation Conceptual Design Budgets

**Appendix C**

- Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission 2007-2008 Budget

**Appendix D**

- CD with copies of related reports
  - Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission 2007 Capital Improvements Study
  - The Role of Genesee County Parks in Improving the Quality of Community Life in Genesee County
  - Mounds ORV Park Master Plan
  - Assessment of Deer Browse in For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum, Holloway Reservoir Regional Park, and Genesee Recreation Area, Genesee County Parks
  - Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission Park Lands Inventory
  - Genesee County Regional Trail Plan 2007

## I. Introduction

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission has created the “Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan” as a tool to guide the development and preservation of the Genesee County Parks system in a manner that is consistent with its mission of “providing affordable, quality recreational facilities and programs to all citizens of Genesee County, and to act as a conservator of publicly-held recreational lands and facilities, historical structures, and educational facilities”. This plan will also make the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission eligible for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to assist the county in reaching its goals.

Access to recreation is universally recognized as one of the basic needs of modern society. It is the Commission’s goal to provide a variety of outdoor experiences for all segments of the population of Genesee County, including services and facilities to directly meet the needs of urban neighborhoods.

## II. Community Description

### A. Introduction to the Social Characteristics

#### 1. Site Description

Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission has more than 11,000 acres of property located within Genesee and Lapeer Counties. The Commission’s boundary is depicted within the Appendix. The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission’s property is located in the southeastern portion of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, approximately 70 miles northwest of Detroit. See Appendix A for boundary map and Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission owned land.

#### 2. Population Characteristics

When beginning the planning process, it is important to examine the population characteristics of a community. The characteristics and trends of a community provide important indicators as to what future recreation needs should be planned to accommodate. These factors include a variety of social and physical factors. Examinations of these factors provide a firm rationale upon which to base future recreation.

TABLE 1 POPULATION GROWTH 1950 - 2000						
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Genesee Co.	270,963	374,313	445,589	450,449	430,459	436,141
State of Michigan	6,371,766	7,823,194	8,875,083	9,262,044	9,295,297	9,938,444

Source: GLS Region 5, 1985-2010 Population Allocation Study

Table 1 presents an interesting view of population trends over the last 50 years for Genesee County and the State of Michigan. The recession of the 80's, coupled with people moving to more rural areas, caused the population in Genesee County to decline (The pattern within the county of a population shift indicates a decline in population in the central city, followed by a similar drop in the first “ring” of municipalities ten years later, while outlying areas continued to experience growth.). The State of Michigan showed great growth from the 1950's before becoming almost stagnant, with only a 6.4% growth population between 1990 and 2000.

TABLE 2 AGE CHARACTERISTIC - 2000				
	State of Michigan		Genesee County	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Age Distribution (Male/Female)</b>				
Under 5 Years	672,005	6.8	31,622	7.3
5 to 17 years	1,923,762	19.3	87,979	20.2
18-24 years	932,137	9.4	38,741	8.9
25-44 years	2,960,544	29.8	129,408	29.7
45-64 years	2,230,978	22.4	97,784	22.4
65-74 years	642,880	6.5	28,600	6.5
75+ years	576,138	5.8	22,007	5.0
Number of Households	3,785,661	N/A	169,825	N/A
Population of One Race	9,746,028	98	426,622	98
White	7,966,053	80	328,350	75
Black	1,412,742	14	88,843	20
Asian	176,510	1.8	3,515	0.8
Other	129,552	1.3	3,408	0.8
Population of Two Races	192,416	1.9	9,519	2.2
Male	4,873,095	49	209,348	48
Female	5,065,349	51	226,793	52
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>9,938,444</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>436,141</b>	<b>100</b>
Source: U.S. Census, 2000				

Table 2 displays the age classifications and characteristics for Genesee County and the State of Michigan. By comparison, the county had a higher percentage of population in each age category under the age of 17. The Commission recognizes this large population of children and tries to develop programs and facilities to meet the needs of these children.

TABLE 3 POPULATION CHARACTERISTIC - 2000				
	State of Michigan	Genesee County	City of Flint	Genesee Township
Population Density (Persons/Sq. Mi.)	169	682	3696	818
Net Change in Per Capita Income	\$8,014	N/A	\$5,318	\$5,775
Unemployed	3.7%	4.5%	7.6%	5.0%
Households without Cars	2.9%	7.8%	15.9%	6.0%
Households below 150% of Poverty Line	17.5%	20.0%	35.1%	18.6%
Persons with Disability	17.2%	20.0%	23.3%	20.3%
Source: U.S. Census, 2000				

Table 3 above depicts an area's unemployment and poverty characteristics. The City of Flint and Genesee Township qualify as the region with the highest concentration of unemployment and poverty, and are used in comparison to the State of Michigan and Genesee County to depict how Genesee County Park and Recreation Commission's improvements will directly

serve a community in need. These communities have higher unemployment rates, more households without motor vehicles, a greater percentage of population below the poverty line, and have a higher percentage of people with disabilities compared to the state and county. The park system provides a critical means of transportation modes via connecting trail systems and free recreational opportunities, and the Commission's action plan recognizes these needs.

### 3. Transportation

#### a. Automobile

The main mode of transportation in Genesee County is the personal automobile. The county has a system of freeways and principal and minor arterials which connect it with the rest of the state.

- 1) I-75 southbound connects Genesee County to Detroit and to the southern United States. Northbound I-75 joins Flint to Saginaw, Midland, and Bay Counties, to northern recreational areas, and extends past the Mackinaw Bridge.
- 2) I-69 eastbound connects to Ontario, Canada. West and south I-69 connects to Lansing in less than an hour, and to Indianapolis and Chicago in several hours.
- 3) I-475 provides a north-south route through the City of Flint and connects to south I-75 in Grand Blanc Township, it continues north to Mt. Morris Township and then west to connect with north I-75.
- 4) US-23 south provides access to Ann Arbor and further south to Toledo, Ohio and the Ohio Turnpike. US-23 north continues to Saginaw, Bay City, and along the Lake Huron coast to other northern recreational areas.
- 5) Other major highways located in Genesee County include US-10, M-21, M-54, M-57 and M-15.

#### b. Mass Transit

##### 1) Primary, Secondary and Suburban Fixed Routes

The Flint Mass Transportation Authority (MTA) currently operates 13 primary fixed routes seven days a week, except national holidays. Monday through Friday, service operates from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., on one-half hour headways, and from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on one-hour headways. On Saturdays, the 13 primary routes operate from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., on one-hour headways. Sunday hours of services are 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., with buses operating on one-hour headways. In addition to the primary routes, the MTA operates secondary and suburban routes. These routes provide peak service, mornings and afternoons, five days a week. They are designed to serve passengers requiring transportation that cannot be accommodated by the traditional fixed routes.

##### 2) Curb-to-Curb Service

The MTA operates a curb-to-curb service known as "Your Ride" through Genesee County, seven days a week. The service hours of operation are the same as the fixed routes. The county-wide service is operated through eight local service centers located in the City of Flint, Davison, Grand Blanc, Fenton, Swartz Creek, Flushing, Clio and Otisville. Vehicles circulate within the eight service areas, and passengers can travel outside of their service area by taking a shuttle. In areas where the curb-to-

curb service overlaps with the fixed route service, eligibility criteria have been established for the curb-to-curb service, in order that passengers who most need this personalized level of service have access to it. Outside of the fixed route service area, curb-to-curb service is available to any person who wants to schedule a trip.

3) Regional Transportation

The MTA provides regional transportation service outside of Genesee County. The initial purpose of this transportation is to assist people moving off of welfare and into the work force by providing transportation to jobs. Due to high employment levels, many employers outside of Genesee County are having difficulty filling positions. The regional transportation service is an attractive benefit that they can offer employees a means of regular transportation to work. In future years, it is anticipated that the amount of service provided will continue to expand as the service becomes more established. The regional transportation service departs from the Downtown Flint Transportation Center and is provided seven days a week to Saginaw, Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, Lapeer and Shiawassee Counties.

(Source: Mass Transportation Authority, 1401 S. Dort Highway, Flint, Michigan, November 1998.)

c. Para-Transit

As of November 1998, there were nine taxicab companies operating in Genesee County.

d. Bicycle Paths

Two classes of trail systems operate within Genesee County: 1) multi-use, non-motorized trails; and 2) signed bike paths shared with street traffic. Separate routes account for over 21 miles of bike paths. Eleven of these miles are in the City of Flint River System, five miles are in the City of Clio, three miles are in the Genesee County Recreation Area, plus one and one-half miles in the City of Burton. An extension of the bike path in the Genesee County Recreation Area is currently underway, which will add over a mile of additional path to connect with the Lions Park in the Township of Genesee. The City of Flint has 29 additional miles of shared street and multi-use trails. Several municipalities, including the City of Clio, City of Flint, and Genesee County plan to build more multi-use, non-motorized trails in the future.

e. Airports

Bishop International Airport offers daily jet service to many cities and daily commuter flights to Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Many charter flights originate out of Bishop Airport to Orlando, Atlantic City, Las Vegas and other popular locations. Regional aircraft commuter flights are available daily to Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Atlanta and Milwaukee, with continuing national and international transfers.

Bishop International Airport is an international Port of Entry. Freight makes up a large portion of the daily flights, and Federal Express provides package and delivery services out of Bishop Airport.

f. Railway Facilities

1) The Amtrak Train terminal for passenger service is located in the City of Flint. Trains depart daily for Toronto and Chicago, with connections to midwest cities within the State of Michigan.

- 2) Genesee County has two Class A railroad lines: 1) CSX Transportation line for north-south service; and 2) CN North America/Grand Trunk for east-west freight.

#### 4. Quality of Life

Beyond the despairing statistic depicted in Table 3, there is also a concern for the health and fitness of Genesee County residents. Recent health statistics indicate that Genesee County is one of the lowest ranking in this category.

Another study revealed that the City of Flint is ranked the third least healthy city to live in the United States (Redbook, June 2000).

The level of health in a community is derived from data on physical activity and fitness, nutrition, substance abuse, environmental health, maternal and infant health, cancer, immunization and infectious disease. This information can best be determined by analyzing the death rates for certain causes of death within a community. Meaning, if a high rate of people are dying from heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes and other health related causes, that is an indicator of a poor level of overall health in a community. Statistics indicate that people in Genesee County are dying of alcohol-induced causes, infant mortality, suicide, cancer, liver disease, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and stroke at a greater rate than the State of Michigan overall (Redbook, June 2000).

This is a clear indicator that Genesee County needs to devote its efforts to lowering these rates. It is widely known that exposure to fresh air, the environment and regular exercise will promote a healthier lifestyle for residents. As Genesee County continues to promote the development of park activities, park programming and non motorized pathway facilities that will increase connections to cultural, social, recreational and educational facilities and activities, the level of health for the entire county can be positively influenced. Recreational activities are also imperative for children and adults and give a positive outlet to those who may be in danger of getting involved in crime.

### B. Introduction to the Physical Characteristics

#### 1. Natural Resources

Natural resources are perhaps the most important factors influencing the initial settlement of an area. They influence type, amount and quality of development. In parks and recreation planning, natural resources are often the basis for the various forms of recreation activity.

##### a. Climate

Genesee County is located in southeastern Michigan, where the “lake effect” is not as great as it is in many other areas of the state. The main effect noticed in Genesee County is increased cloudiness late in fall and early in winter, when the prevailing wind moves cold air across the warmer lake water. About 5 to 10 percent more sunshine falls on Genesee County than on similar areas in western Michigan.

The average annual precipitation is 31 inches, with an average annual snowfall of 45 inches. The average seasonal Fahrenheit temperatures are 21° in the winter, 45° in the spring, 71° in the summer and 53° in the autumn. The average number of days per year under zero degrees is ten and the average number of days over 90° is 32.

##### b. Physiography

The landscape of Genesee County is characterized as relatively flat to gently rolling. Low rolling hills border Genesee County on the north, east and south, leaving the central portions relatively flat, except for a ridge running from the center of the City of Flint north to Thetford Township.

Generally, the region slopes down from the southeast to the northwest. The highest elevation, 1,030 feet above sea level is located on the southwestern border of the City of Fenton. The lowest elevation, 600 feet above sea level, is located on the banks of the Flint River in Montrose Township.

The soils for the region Genesee County Parks and Recreation serves can be viewed in the Appendix.

Five distinctive bedrock formations are found beneath the soils of Genesee County.

1) Saginaw Formation

This is the youngest, most prevalent bedrock formation which occupies the northwestern two-thirds of Genesee County and consists of sandstone and shale, with occasional thin coal seams and limestone.

2) Michigan Formation

This is the second youngest bedrock formation and it lies to the south and east of the Saginaw Formation. This formation is comprised primarily of shale, with occasional deposits of sandstone, gypsum and anhydrite.

3) Marshall Sandstone Formation

This is found in portions of Argentine, Fenton, Atlas and Davison Townships. This formation is a potential producer of oil and natural gas.

4) Napoleon Sandstone Formation

This is found in the extreme eastern portions of Davison and Atlas Townships. This formation is very similar to the Saginaw Formation with respect to groundwater quality, quantity and availability.

5) Coldwater Shale Formation

This is the oldest and least common bedrock formation beneath Genesee County. It occupies the extreme southwestern corner of Argentine Township.

The bedrock formations below Genesee County are all located a considerable distance below the surface of the ground and is all stable. As a result, they provide no serious limitations to parks and recreation development.

c. Hydrology

There are over 94 lakes in Genesee County, most of which are located in the southern portion. These lakes offer approximately 5,000 acres of water surface. In Genesee County, a lake or stream is never more than six miles away from any location.

Most of Genesee County's lakes and streams are the result of glacial action. The northwestern portion of Genesee County is part of the bed of an ancient glacial lake. The remainder of the area is a collage of moraines, till plains and out-wash plains.

Approximately 355 lineal miles of streams run throughout Genesee County, a majority of which are tributaries of the Flint and Shiawassee Rivers.

Genesee County lands are drained by three major drainage basins: 1) Shiawassee River Drainage Basin; 2) Cass River Drainage Basin; and 3) Flint River Drainage Basin. The Flint River Basin drains over 6,200 square miles. These drainage basins, in turn, are drained by the Saginaw Drainage Basin which embraces a multi-county area. Within each of the three major drainage basins serving Genesee County are 13 minor watersheds (creeks): 1) Armstrong; 2) Brent; 3) Brent Run; 4) Butternut; 5) Cole; 6) Gibson; 7) Gilkey; 8) Kearsley; 9) Messmore; 10) Swartz Creek; 11) Swartz Creek West Branch; 12) Thread River; and 13) Pine Run.

The development of open space parks and recreation in close proximity to streams and lakes can capitalize on the recreational potential of the water frontage, as well as provide a buffer zone to potentially damaging flooding.

d. Vegetation

Many varieties of vegetation can be found in Genesee County. Tree types include elm, oak (red, bur and swamp white), hickory, cedar, willow, alder, maple (soft, red and sugar), cottonwood, cherry, aspen, basswood, shagbark hickory, sycamore, yellow birch, beech, hemlock and pine (red and white). Genesee County also has plentiful fruits, including blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, mulberries, grapes and wild black cherries. Wildflowers, such as clover, goldenrod, ragweed, bluegrass, crabgrass and curled dock are found in Genesee County, as are marsh and aquatic plants, such as cattails, pondweeds, wild rice, water lilies and wild millet. Cultivated plants, such as wheat, barley, oats, corn, apples and cherries are grown.

Wooded areas present valuable recreational resources, provide natural functions which can be valuable to human settlement and are aesthetic assets to a region. The preservation of these lands becomes more difficult as the urbanization process increases. It is important in the urbanization process to either avoid wooded lands or take precautions to preserve the existing vegetation during the construction process.

e. Wildlife

The various types of wildlife that inhabits Genesee County provide recreational activities in the form of wildlife watching, studying and hunting. During the summer, many types of birds are found in Genesee County including mallard, black and wood ducks, blue-winged teal, the sora, Wilson snipe, ruffed grouse, prairie chicken, Bobwhite quail, ring-necked pheasant, mourning dove, various woodpeckers, blue jay, chickadee, wood thrush, cardinal, robin and bluebird. Fur and game mammals found include raccoon, weasel, otter, skunk, red fox, woodchuck, squirrel, cottontail rabbit and white tail deer. Area lakes contain a variety of fish, amphibians and reptiles.

f. Air Quality

The information provided in this section was obtained from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) *1996 Annual Air Quality Report for Michigan*.

The Federal Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended in 1970, 1977, and 1990, requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards which define the maximum permissible concentrations for the following pollutants: particulate matter consisting of fine particulates with diameters less than ten

microns ( $PM_{10}$ ), particulate matter consisting of fine particulates with diameters less than 2.5 microns ( $PM_{2.5}$ ), sulfur dioxide ( $SO_2$ ) nitrogen dioxide ( $NO_2$ ), carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb) and Ozone ( $O_3$ ).

There are two types of air quality standards. The primary standard is designed to protect the public health of the most susceptible individuals in a population (children, elderly and those with chronic respiratory ailments). The secondary standard is designed to protect public health and welfare or ensure quality of life. Many secondary standards are the same as the primary standard.

The Michigan Air Sampling Network (MASN) is designed to measure air quality throughout the state and consists of over 200 monitoring sensors in 29 counties. As of 1996, there were seven monitoring sensors located within Genesee County.

An area is considered to be in compliance with  $SO_2$ ,  $NO_2$ , or CO if both the applicable annual standard is met and no more than one one-hour, three-hour, eight-hour, or 24-hour measurement is collected per year that is greater than the concentration specified in the standard. To determine primary and secondary compliance for Pb, values are collected for three consecutive months and are averaged and compared to the standard.  $PM_{10}$  compliance is determined by comparing the concentrations of samples collected over a 24-hour period with the 24-hour standard of  $150 \text{ g/m}^3$ , and a similar method is used to determine compliance of  $PM_{2.5}$ . The number of accidents is used to determine compliance with the ozone standard, according to an established formula.

According to the DEQ, there were no accidents of  $SO_2$ ,  $NO_2$ , CO, Pb, or  $PM_{10}$  or  $PM_{2.5}$  in Genesee County for the time period of 1989 through 1996. In Flint, all of the reduced air quality has been due to ozone levels. The last occurrences of unhealthy ozone levels in Flint were one day each in 1992 and 1993. There were no such events in 1994, 1995 or 1996.

### III. Administrative Structure

#### A. Role of Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for the operations and maintenance of park property that is owned by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners. From its yearly budget, the Park Commission manages and finances its own maintenance, ranger service and park enhancements. They do get assistance on special projects from the Sheriff's Work Release program, and there are mutual agreements with local law enforcement units where each individual park is located. The Board of Commissioners also assists in providing matching funds for capital improvements, and provide funding for extensive volunteerism for programs and special projects.

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission consists of ten members and meets an average of twice a month. As required by Public Act 261 of the Public Acts of Michigan, 1965, members of the Commission include the Chairperson of the Genesee County Road Commission, the Chairperson of the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Genesee County Drain Commissioner, and seven appointed members (three of whom may be members of the Genesee County Board of Commissioners). The Commission elects offices, including president, vice-president and secretary.

Current members of the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission are Joe Krapohl, Mike Keeler, William Lucas, James Washington, Bob Ranger, Billy Bradshaw, Ted Henry, Archie Bailey, Patrick Gleason, and Jeff Wright.

Commissioner Henry, Bailey and Gleason also serve as Genesee County Commissioners.

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is directed by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners. The remaining six County Commissioners are Patricia Lockwood, Omar Sims, Jamie Curtis, Miles Gadola, John Northrup and Brenda Clack.

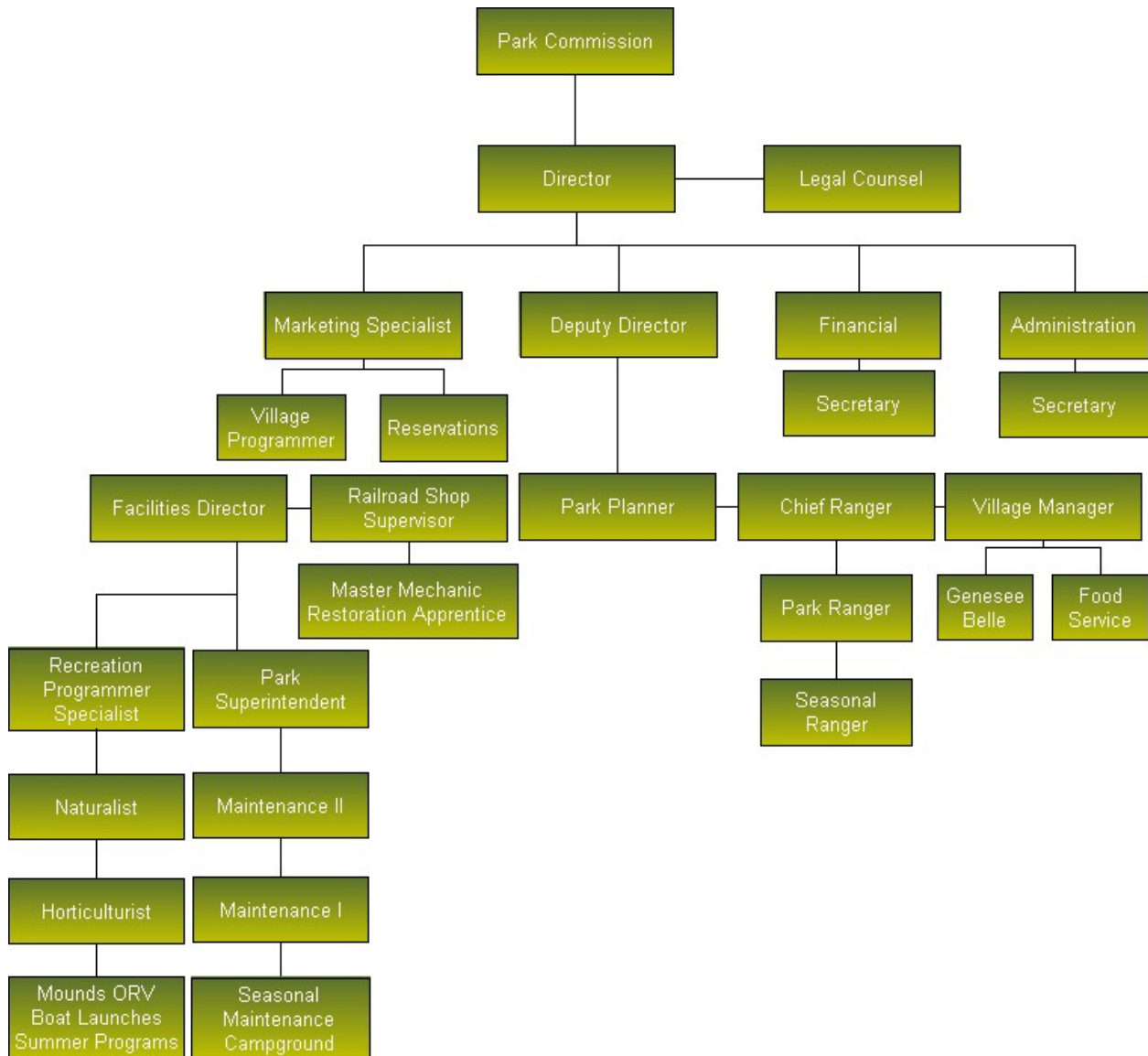
#### B. Staff Description and Organizational Chart

The Parks and Recreation Commission directs the staff in their duties. The Commission establishes policies, develops programs and plans and makes financial decisions.

A full-time director is responsible for coordinating the directives of the Commission, as well as performing a liaison function between the staff and the Commission. In addition, the Commission employs a permanent, full-time staff of 24 operations employees and six maintenance employees.

No change is expected in these staffing levels. A seasonal staff of approximately 300 is employed, primarily during the summer months.

**Genesee County Parks & Recreation Legislative Organizational Chart**



### C. Annual Budget

The projected budget for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 is \$8,385,632. Expectations are that the budget will remain at approximately this level through 2009. A copy of the budget is included as Appendix D.

### D. Current Funding Sources

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission's operating budget is derived primarily from a one-half mill (.48625 for the year 2004) Genesee County Park millage and from user fees. The Commission also receives 25% of Genesee County's accommodations (hotel/motel) tax (which can vary on an annual/semi-annual basis) that is collected, a small amount of interest from two trust funds, and on occasion, various public and private grant funds.

Capital development funds are not included in the operating budget due to lack of financial resources. All capital projects undertaken in the past five years have been funded by one of the following sources: 1) state grants, with matching funds, when required, drawn from the Board of Commissioner revenue; 2) private grants or donations; and 3) revenue bonds.

### E. Role of Volunteers

The Commission also utilizes over 200 volunteers who perform tasks such as historical interpretation, trail maintenance, operation of amusement rides, office work and gardening.

### F. Relationship with School Districts, Other Public Agencies and Private Organizations

Due to the locations of the parks within local municipalities, Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission has established a partnership with these local agencies to promote community involvement and ownership of the parks. The remainder of this section explains the local community's involvement with the county park system and describes how Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission continues to work with them.

#### 1. Local Minor Civil Division Role in Genesee County

Municipalities (cities, villages and townships) have the responsibility of acquisition, development, operation and programming of public recreational facilities and services for the frequent short-term use of local residents.

Municipalities can establish Recreation and Park Departments or Commissions with full or part-time staff to provide programs and operate facilities for both the community and neighborhood levels to make maximum use of existing school district facilities.

#### 2. School District Role

School districts make available to the local units of government land and facilities at each school site for the purpose of recreational programming when not in use for school programs.

#### 3. Cooperative Projects with Schools and Other Agencies

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission continues to work with area schools and recreational agencies on the development of facilities and programs. For example, in-school and on-site outdoor education programs are provided for schools throughout Genesee County. The Commission, in conjunction with the City of Flint and several other agencies, also has been an active participant in the "Music in the Parks" summer concert series for many years.

The Adopt-a-Park program is an on-going relationship between a county park and individuals or volunteers from organizations, schools, youth groups and businesses. This program is designed to help keep county parks attractive and safe with the ultimate goal to encourage people to enjoy the benefits of the parks. The purpose of this program is to enhance the beauty of the park and to increase community pride, awareness, and involvement in the Genesee County Parks and its facilities.

Past cooperative efforts include the development of a world-class BMX track at Richfield Park in conjunction with the BMX Parents Association; the development of American Youth Soccer Organization fields in conjunction with school districts; the development of an equestrian trail system in conjunction with local equestrian groups; provision of sites for Girl Scout and Boy Scout activities, and participation with MSU Cooperative Extension relative to 4-H activities.

It is the Commission's intent to continue to work cooperatively with other agencies on projects that are beneficial to the community and to actively seek out programs that will expand the recreational opportunities for the citizens of Genesee County.

#### 4. County Role

County government has a responsibility to provide recreational facilities and programs which, because of size, scope or other unique characteristics, cannot be realistically developed or funded at a local level. Thus, county facilities serve as a supplement to local facilities where the need exists, and should be easily accessible to the county population concentrations.

The objective of a county Parks and Recreation Commission is to acquire recreation lands and establish intensive day use and overnight recreation areas for year-round use. Parks are to be developed in a manner which conserves land and water resources and makes these resources attractive and desirable for recreational use. Fully developed parks that provide active recreational opportunities is the goal.

The county also has a responsibility to assist and cooperate with local agencies and provide consultant services upon request involving coordination between the county and local communities.

#### 5. State Recreation Role in Genesee County

State government has recreation responsibilities in the southeastern Michigan region in six program areas: 1) development of a state-wide recreation plan; 2) provision of large-scale recreation lands, facilities and programs to serve the recreation needs of people on an inter-county, regional and state-wide basis; 3) acquisition of management and open space and natural lands; 4) protection of certain natural resource areas and wildlife for conservation purposes; 5) provision of assistance to lower levels of government in the development of recreation facilities and programs; and 6) provision and operation of special purpose facilities, such as fishing access sites, boating sites and other suitable water activity sites.

- a. The State has acquired and developed land in southeastern Michigan for large-scale or special park and recreation areas, water access and boating sites. The recreation areas provide high volume or intensive recreational facilities and programs within each site. Sites near and within urban areas are desirable because they can take advantage of unique natural resources and serve high-density populations.

These recreation areas also retain extensive natural areas where development and use are minor, to be held for their aesthetic, scenic, and open space values and as buffers to the intensive recreation facilities. **However, the State does not fulfill this role within Genesee County.**

- b. The State plays a role in protecting certain natural resource lands necessary for the conservation of fish and wildlife, water bodies and forests, through acquisition and various management and regulation means.
  - c. Assistance is provided to local, county and regional recreation agencies relative to the application and allocation of state grants or financial assistance.
  - d. Currently, there are no major state-owned facilities in Genesee County, although some state facilities border the county.
6. Federal Role in Genesee County

In the past, the federal government has provided funds to assist and encourage operating agencies to acquire, develop and maintain recreation facilities and programs in Genesee County. This role has been voided, but the county is optimistic that the government will re-prioritize and create a positive impact to the county parks once more.

In the past 15 years, many local units of government have used federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to develop small neighborhood parks and to construct and service senior citizen centers.

The federal government should also acquire and develop significant natural resource areas for recreation and conservation purposes, which are a multi state interest and are too large for one state or county to acquire and operate alone.

7. Methods and Procedures

Not all levels of government within Genesee County maintain parks and recreation programs. However, the City of Flint Parks and Recreation Commission, Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission, and local school districts maintain extensive recreation facilities and programs. Several local units of government have developed their own Parks and Recreation Commissions, including the Grand Blanc Area Parks and Recreation, Davison Area Parks and Recreation, Clio City Parks and Recreation, Fenton Parks and Recreation, Burton Parks and Recreation, and other local units of government engage in the development of community parks and park programs.

## IV. Recreation Inventory

### A. Inventory of Genesee County Park Facilities

County-owned parks are located in Fenton, Flushing, Genesee, Richfield and Thetford Townships and the City of Burton. Their relationship to the larger park system can be viewed in the Appendix. Several of the local units of government within Genesee County contain park land owned and operated by Genesee County. The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission guides the development and management of the following land. Details for each of these facilities are discussed in the following section titled Public Resources. The numbers proceeding the parks listed refer to the boundary maps located in Appendix A.

#### 1. Major Parks

- ▶ Bluebell Beach - Genesee Township (2)
- ▶ Linden County Park - Fenton Township (E)
- ▶ Flushing County Park - Flushing Township (F)
- ▶ Buell Lake County Park - Thetford Township (G)
- ▶ For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum - City of Burton (C)
- ▶ Richfield County Park - Richfield Township (10)
- ▶ Davison Roadside Park - City of Burton (D)

#### 2. Regional Recreational Facilities/Attractions

- ▶ Holloway Reservoir Regional Park (B)
- ▶ Genesee Recreation Area (A)
- ▶ Mounds ORV Area - Genesee Township (7)
- ▶ Crossroads Village and the Huckleberry Railroad (2)
- ▶ Stepping Stone Falls - Genesee Township (3)
- ▶ Everett A. Cummings Center - Genesee Township (6)
- ▶ Wolverine Campground and Buttercup Beach - Richfield Township (13)

Generally, the spatial distribution of the existing recreational facilities is excellent, with a major park in three of the four quadrants of Genesee County. The southeastern portion of the county, including Grand Blanc City and Goodrich Village, is the only area not within 15 minutes driving time of a county park. However, this area is in close proximity to Oakland County, which contains many excellent recreation areas operated by both Oakland County and the state, including the Holly Recreation Area and the Seven Lakes Recreation Area.

### B. Public Resources

The physical location of Genesee County places the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission in a unique position. Genesee County is within one hour's driving time from the Detroit area, a national major metropolitan area. The county is also part of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) anchored by the City of Flint, which is within the county's boundaries. The pressure and growth away from the inner urban centers make the county's waterways and scenic areas valuable as public recreational areas. However, the public development of these resources is in competition with private developments, particularly of year-round lakefront homes. In several projects, the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission attempts to balance the public interest with private development by providing recreational facilities in scenic areas which enhance the tourism industry and increase the quality of life in the county.

The major parks and regional recreational facilities listed here differ from the local parks in size and in the variety of recreational opportunities available and are intended to serve the diverse needs of Genesee County residents. These attractions, while geared to local needs and desires, may also add to the tourism industry in Genesee County.

In recognition of the inevitable transfer of recreation users among park facilities in this region, the Genesee County Parks system has established certain fees and charges to assist in supporting the facilities used by non-residents. A listing of the same is supplied in the Appendix section of this document.

Following is a summary of the site, the age groups served, accessibility, and the types of major facilities available for recreational use within the Genesee County parks system. **No entrance fees are required for these parks.**

1. Major Parks

a. Bluebell Beach and Flint River Trail Bike Path - Genesee Township

*Size:* 350 acres, including 2,000 feet of frontage on Mott Lake.

*Age Groups Served:* All ages

*Location:* Excellent - Bray Road or Carpenter Road via the Flint River Trail. *Facilities:* Splash park, swimming beach, pavilions, playground, aquatic feature, play feature, and .8 miles of paved trail linking Carpenter Road and Bluebell Beach.

*Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 3. Trails, playground, parking lot, restrooms and boat launch are all considered barrier free. With upcoming future updates, the county would like to provide barrier free restrooms, water fountains and picnic areas.

*DNR Recreation Grants:* Contract # – 89-382 (Recreation Bond Program)  
Scope Items – Mott Lake Fishing Site  
Condition – Active and in use

b. Linden County Park - Fenton Township

*Size:* 240 acres, including 1,200 feet of frontage on Byram Lake.

*Age Groups Served:* All ages.

*Location:* Excellent - Access adjacent to the Village of Linden.

*Facilities:* Swimming beach, play fields, tennis and multi-purpose courts, trails, play equipment areas, picnic areas, restrooms and shelters.

*Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 4. Barrier free parking and trails have been provided in the park, which allows full access through the site and to the pavilion and beach area. The park also provides barrier free picnic pads, a handicap accessible water fountain and barrier free restroom facilities

*DNR Recreation Grants:* Contract # – 707 (Michigan Land Trust Fund)  
Scope Items – Acquisition of 107 acres  
Condition – Completed and in use

- |   |               |                                |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------|
| : | Contract # –  | TF 00-170 (MNRTF)              |
|   | Scope Items – | Linden Park Beach Improvements |
|   | Condition –   |                                |
- c. Flushing County Park - Flushing Township
- Size:* 105 acres, with 2,080 feet of frontage on the Flint River.
- Age Groups Served:* All ages.
- Location:* Excellent-McKinley Road adjacent to the City of Flushing.
- Facilities:* Play fields, horseshoe courts, preschool play equipment areas, picnic areas and shelters.
- Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 2. Safe play zones need to be incorporated into a transitional plan, as well as, barrier free paths connecting its program elements.
- DNR Recreation Grants:*
- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Contract # –  | 89-381 (Recreation Bond Program)       |
| Scope Items – | Resurface tennis and basketball courts |
| Condition –   | Completed and in use                   |
- d. Buell Lake County Park - Thetford Township
- Size:* 178 acres of land, 3,600 feet of frontage on Buell Lake.
- Age Groups Served:* All ages.
- Location:* Good - Lake and Genesee Roads, relates well to Clio and Otisville. Barrier free boat launch, trail system and boardwalk allow for excellent access once in the park. Safe play zones need to be incorporated into a transitional plan.
- Facilities:* Play fields, play equipment areas, picnic areas, fishing, shelters and model airplane flying field.
- Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 3. Barrier free boat launch, trail system and boardwalk allow for excellent access once in the park. Safe play zones need to be incorporated into a transitional plan.
- DNR Recreation Grants:*
- |               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Contract # –  | TF-01-040 (MNRTF)       |
| Scope Items – | Buell Park Improvements |
| Condition –   | Completed and in use    |
- e. For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum - City of Burton
- Size:* 353 acres of land; two acres of water.
- Age Groups Served:* All ages.
- Location:* Good - Access via Genesee Road and Davison Road, relates well to the City of Flint.
- Facilities:* Nature trails, interpretive buildings, and indoor and outdoor exhibits.
- Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 3. All buildings are barrier free, however, this is a nature preserve and trails are rustic and natural.
- DNR Recreation Grants:*
- |               |                                     |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Contract # –  | BF 92-069 (Recreation Bond Program) |
| Scope Items – | For-Mar Visitor Center              |
| Condition –   | Completed and in use                |

- f. Richfield County Park - Richfield Township  
*Size:* 345 acres, with 720 feet of frontage on the Flint River.  
*Age Groups Served:* All ages.  
*Location:* Good - Access via Irish Road.  
*Facilities:* Play fields, shelters, picnic areas, tennis courts.  
*Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 2. Barrier free parking with some barrier free paths is provided. The Commission will transition the designing for barrier free picnic areas, barrier free water fountain and trails to allow access.
- g. Davison Roadside County Park - City of Burton  
*Size:* 4 acres.  
*Age Groups Served:* All ages.  
*Accessibility and Location:* Good - Access via Davison and Belsay Roads.  
*Facilities:* Picnic area, beginners’ sledding hill, pavilion, and playground.  
*Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 2. Parking lot provides barrier free parking. Picnic areas need to become barrier free. Pavilion and playground are barrier free.

Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is always striving to improve accessibility to and through its parks. Every time the Commission makes physical improvements to its parks, this goal is considered and accomplished. The Commission is also planning for barrier free access to its parks with a complex trail system. Only Bluebell can be accessed with non-motorized transportation.

2. Regional Recreational Facilities/Attractions

- a. Holloway Reservoir Regional Park  
 The Holloway Reservoir Regional Park in Genesee and Lapeer Counties encompasses 5,860 acres of land, including 1,975 acres of water (Holloway Reservoir). The park provides open space for a variety of educational and recreational activities, including swimming, boating, picnicking, camping and fishing. Additional activities have been designed to increase interest in the park on both the local and regional level. Located in Richfield Township and Lapeer County, the following summarizes the area:

- Size:* 5,860 acres  
*Age Groups Served:* All ages  
*Accessibility and Location:* Approximately 15 miles northeast of the City of Flint.  
*Facilities:* Holloway Reservoir; Buttercup Beach; Walleye Pike Boat Launch; Hogback Area; Zemmer Road Fishing Site; Toboggan Hill; Equestrian Trail; Wolverine Campground.  
*Accessibility:* Accessibility ranking – 2. All of these facilities require barrier free improvements. These include barrier free parking, paths, fishing access, water fountains and toilet facilities. However, it is critical to the Commission that the natural integrity of these sites be maintained and the improvements work within the natural systems and programmed elements.  
*DNR Recreation Grants:* Contract # – 89-418 (Recreation Bond Program)  
 Scope Items – Wolverine Campground  
 Condition – Active and in use

b. Genesee Recreation Area

The Genesee Recreation area consists of 4,460 acres of scenic land in Richfield and Genesee Townships. Like the Holloway Reservoir Park, traditional recreational activities such as swimming, picnicking, bicycling, hiking, boating, and fishing are provided. Activities and attractions such as Stepping Stone Falls, Crossroads Village and the Huckleberry Railroad, create a greater regional appeal, as well as add to the tourism industry of the area. Located in Genesee and Richfield Townships, the following summarizes the area:

<i>Size:</i>	4,460 acres												
<i>Age Groups Served:</i>	All ages.												
<i>Location:</i>	Excellent access and relationship to the City of Flint. Safe play zones need to be implemented at the older playground sites.												
<i>Facilities:</i>	Stepping Stone Falls; C.S. Mott Lake; Bluebell Beach; Historical Crossroads Village and the Huckleberry Railroad; Bluegill Boat Launch; Everett A. Cummings Center; Goldenrod Beach Disc Golf; Richfield Park; Timber Wolf Fishing Site; Equestrian Trails; Snowmobile Trails; Richfield Park BMX Course.												
<i>Accessibility:</i>	Accessibility ranking – 2. All of these facilities require barrier free improvements. These include barrier free parking, paths, fishing access, water fountains and toilet facilities. However, it is critical to the Commission that the natural integrity of these sites be maintained and the improvements work within the natural systems and programmed elements.												
<i>DNR Recreation Grants:</i>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Contract # –</td> <td>BF 93-127 (Recreation Bond Program)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Scope Items –</td> <td>Restroom and concessions building at Walleye Boat Launch</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Condition –</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Contract # –</td> <td>N/A (Boat Grant-in-aid Program)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Scope Items –</td> <td>Restroom and concessions building at Bluegill Boat Launch</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Condition –</td> <td>Completed and in use</td> </tr> </table>	Contract # –	BF 93-127 (Recreation Bond Program)	Scope Items –	Restroom and concessions building at Walleye Boat Launch	Condition –		Contract # –	N/A (Boat Grant-in-aid Program)	Scope Items –	Restroom and concessions building at Bluegill Boat Launch	Condition –	Completed and in use
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Scope Items –	Restroom and concessions building at Walleye Boat Launch												
Condition –													
Contract # –	N/A (Boat Grant-in-aid Program)												
Scope Items –	Restroom and concessions building at Bluegill Boat Launch												
Condition –	Completed and in use												
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Contract # –	90-225 (Recreation Bond Program)												
Scope Items –	Fishing Piers												
Condition –	Active and in use												

c. Mounds ORV Area - Genesee Township

*Size:* 370 acres, with 230 acres open to ORV use.  
*Age Groups Served:* All ages.  
*Location:* Good - Access via E. Mt. Morris Road. Genesee County Road Commission has begun the process of developing a master plan. *Facilities:* For motorcycles, mini-bikes, dune buggies, four-wheel drive vehicles and all-terrain vehicles.

<i>Accessibility:</i>	Accessibility ranking – N/A. Accessibility within the park plan will be addressed in this plan.			
<i>DNR Recreation Grants:</i>	Contract # –	ORV 311024-94		
	Scope Items –	Mounds Park Development		
	Condition –	Completed		
	Contract # –	01-001Off-Road Vehicle Improvement Fund	Trail	
	Scope Items –	Mounds Park Development		
	Condition –	Active and in use		

d. Crossroads Village and the Huckleberry Railroad

Size:

Age and Groups Served:

Location:

Facilities:

All ages

Bray Road and Stanley Road to I-475

Historical Crossroads Village, a bicentennial project, offers a glimpse of a Michigan village in the 1860 to 1880 historical period. Over 30 structures serve as a background for this “living village” concept with crafters at work. The buildings are the Atlas Grist Mill, the Stanley School, the Horton-Colwell Building, the Billy Durant Barn, the Flint Township Hall, the Fox House, Crossroads Lumber Company (saw mill), Masters’ Cider Mill, Judge Wisner’s Carriage Barn, Clayton Township Hall, the Buzzell House, Davison Railroad Depot, the Eldridge House, the Attica Hotel, Coldwater Road Chapel, Calkins Barn, Durand Law Office, Salter Log House, Fowler Barber Shop, Manwaring Building (print shop), North & Son Bank, Fenton Carriage Barn, an ice house, carousel building, Victorian gazebo, blacksmith shop, the Pere’ Marquette Caboose A621, and the Mill Street Warehouse and Dining Room. Also featured are several vintage amusement rides--the Charles W. Parker Ferris Wheel, Charles W. Parker Carousel, Venetian Swing, pony cart ride and Patriot “Flyer” miniature train ride. The Genesee Belle at the village also provides rides on C.S. Mott Lake. Events include “Ghost and Goodies” at Halloween and “Christmas at Crossroads”

The Huckleberry Railroad is located within Crossroads Village and follows an eight-mile loop through the Genesee Recreation Area on a narrow gauge rail. The train equipment is steam-powered and restored to 1800’s vintage.

*Accessibility:*

Accessibility ranking – 3. All the shops, events and boat and train rides are completely accessible. Future renovations will provide accessible water fountains and parking.

- e. Stepping Stone Falls  
 Size:  
 Age Groups Served: All ages  
 Location: Stepping Stone Falls is part of the dam which forms Mott Lake.  
 Facilities: The height on the main fall is 11.5 feet and is lighted from sunset to midnight with changing colored lights.  
 Accessibility: Accessibility ranking – 3. Barrier free parking, restrooms and paths are provided. The county will transition barrier free picnic areas, seating areas and water fountains.  
 DNR Recreation Grants: Contract # – TF 94-177 (MNRTF)  
 Scope Items – Stepping Stone Fall walkway  
 Condition – Completed
- f. Everett A. Cummings Center - Genesee Township  
 Age Groups Served: All ages.  
 Location: Good - Access via Mt Morris Road and Baxter Road.  
 Facilities: Trails for hiking, horses, and snowmobiles.  
 Accessibility: Accessibility ranking – 3. County will implement accessible parking with future renovations.
- g. Wolverine Campground and Buttercup Beach - Columbiaville  
 Size: 195 campsites available.  
 Age Groups Served: All ages.  
 Location: Good - Access via Irish Road.  
 Facilities: Campsites, beach, swimming, playground and boat launch.  
 Accessibility: Accessibility ranking – 1. Boat launching and fishing access require barrier free designs. Playground is barrier free.

There are no historical sites within the Genesee County Parks and Recreation boundaries.  
 All parks receiving grants are still operational and open to the public.

### C. Inventory of Private Resources

#### 1. Private Parks

There are two public parks, which receive private funding within the City of Flint, Flint Memorial Park and Ballenger Park.

Memorial Park and Ballenger Park were built by the Ballenger family and are maintained by funding provided by the Ballenger Trust Fund.

Memorial Park, located west of the Genesee County Administration Complex, has three tennis courts, a basketball court, a multiple-use paved area, an ice rink, a park warming house/storage building, a small ballfield, and a passive park area with nature trees. This park receives considerable use by both area children and adults who drive to the park.

Ballenger Park has three tennis courts, two handball courts, a stage/amphitheater, a playground, an ice rink and warming house, and a passive area with mature trees. This park

has been a perennial favorite due to its proximity to Kettering University, its nearby fraternities, and the adjacent neighborhood which are not served by a city neighborhood park.

## 2. College Facilities

### a. University of Michigan–Flint Campus

The university has the following recreation facilities which are available not only to its students, university personnel and alumni, but also to the public for nominal fees: indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, running track, fencing room, weight room and handball/racquetball court facilities.

### b. Kettering University

The school maintains the following recreation facilities for its students: games room, weight room, gym, four ball fields, three football fields and two soccer fields.

### c. C.S. Mott Community College

The campus has an indoor swimming pool and six tennis courts.

## 3. Hurley Health and Fitness Center

An open–membership health/fitness center opened in 1990 in the former Great Lakes Technology Center complex, now Genesee Business Center. It has an indoor pool, running track and weightlifting/aerobics center.

## 4. Genesys Health and Fitness Center

An open–membership health/fitness center opened in 1997 at the Genesys Hospital complex. It has an indoor pool, running track, tennis courts, racquetball courts and weightlifting/aerobics center.

## 5. Commercial Facilities

Commercial facilities assist in alleviating some of the demand from public facilities. Flint area residents have many types of fine commercial recreational facilities available to them including bowling alleys, fitness and health clubs, movie theaters (inside cinemas and drive–ins), miniature golf, indoor and outdoor golf driving ranges, roller skating rinks, indoor ice skating rinks, public golf courses, video game shops and various entertainment at the Perani Arena and Event Center.

In addition, two other major facilities are available within a short driving range — Sports Creek Raceway, a horse racetrack in Swartz Creek and Mt. Holly Ski Resort in Holly.

## D. Relationship of Parks and Recreation to Other Functions

### E. Unique Recreation and Preservation Space

These areas differ from other community and regional facilities in that the space provided usually contains a single activity, recreational function, or special land area to be preserved. However, the special use area may accommodate other closely related activities or supporting facilities. These areas serve various age groups, depending on the type of activity, and are located to provide recreation on a community-wide basis similar to that of the community park and the major park. Adequate, well-designed parking facilities are essential to the feasibility of most special use functions.

Among the more common uses and types of activities developed as unique attractions include the golf course, swimming and sunbathing areas, marina and boat facilities, arboretum or botanical garden, zoological garden, and major sports stadium. Other functions of these areas may include adequate right-of-way for use as trails, naturalistic greenways linking the various park units and continuous landscaped boulevards, roadways and scenic routes.

1. Role of Genesee Intermediate School District-Ligon Outdoor Center (February 2001 Amendment).

Through Ligon Outdoor Center, Genesee Intermediate School District is the primary provider of public outdoor/environmental educational offerings for the section of Genesee County north of Pierson Road. For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum, owned by Genesee County and operated by the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission, is the primary provider of public outdoor/environmental educational offerings for the section of Genesee County south of Pierson Road.

Ligon Nature Outdoor Center is located in northeastern Genesee County in Section 11 of Thetford Township. It is bounded by Buell Lake County Park on the north, Farrand Road on the south, Genesee Road on the west and several private parcels of property fronting on Belsay Road on the east. The nearly pristine 268 acres are replete with native forests, a 10-acre wetland, meadow, 3 ½ miles of hiking/cross country trails and a five acre spring fed glacial lake. This parcel was deeded to the Genesee Intermediate School District in 1975 by the James Ligon family. The outdoor education center is a 15 minute drive from Flint.

The property is served by highways M-57 (east/west), M-15 (north/south), and I-75. The overarching goal of proposed development is to increase and improve public recreation activities and outdoor/environmental educational offerings to all residents of Genesee County, particularly those living in the section of Genesee County north of Pierson Road. Expansion of existing facilities and programs would make Ligon visitor-friendly to seniors, tourists, handicapped, disadvantaged youth and bikers/joggers.

F. Major Recreational Areas near Genesee County

In addition to the Genesee County parks system, there are more than 20 major public recreation areas (state and county) within one hour's drive from the Central Business District (CBD) of the City of Flint. Most of these are located on the southern and eastern borders of Genesee County, in Oakland County and Lapeer County, respectively.

State of Michigan parks located approximately five to six miles from the southern Genesee County border include the Holly Recreation Area (6,943 acres), Seven Lakes State Recreation Area (1,378 acres), Ortonville State Park (3,996 acres), and the Metamora-Hadley State Park (693 acres). These four areas all have excellent recreation facilities. The Oakland County parks system also has a wide variety of excellent facilities.

In addition to these major parks, many major recreational sports and cultural facilities are available within an hour's drive of the City of Flint. These include the Ford Field, home of the *Detroit Lions* National Football League team and host to many other recreational events; the Joe Louis Arena, home of *Detroit Red Wings* National Hockey League team, and host to many other cultural and civic events, the Palace of Auburn Hills, host to many concerts, circuses, and other cultural or recreational events; Comerica Park, home of the *Detroit Tigers* American League Baseball team, and several major theaters, including the Fox Theater and the Masonic Temple, which host concerts and major Broadway plays.

## V. Description of the Planning Process

The first step in the development of the plan involved gathering and updating information about Genesee County. Physical characteristics of the area, demographic information about the community and an inventory of existing facilities helped provide the base from which future recreation decisions are made.

An analysis of information gathered determined where the community is deficient in providing recreational facilities or is providing a surplus of various recreation facilities and programs in comparison to national standards. The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission worked diligently to acquire citizens' opinions for this plan as described in Section VI. A public hearing was held by the Parks and Recreation Commission on \_\_\_\_ following a thirty day comment period. The plan was then approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Genesee County Board of Commissioners

This plan reflects a prioritized list of improvements to existing facilities and the development of new facilities that best address the needs and desires of the citizens of Genesee County.

## VI. Description of the Public Input Process

- A. This plan has been developed by the staff of the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission. Several community resources were asked for technical information. The following considerations were used in developing the plan:
1. Citizen opinion was solicited in the form of volunteer groups which meet on a regular basis and advise staff regarding what is needed in the parks and how to best fulfill those needs.
  2. Comment cards and surveys of park users.
  3. The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission meets on a regular basis, the meetings are open to the public, and the public is invited to address the meetings to voice any concerns they may have regarding the parks.
  4. A substantial low-income, minority population is located adjacent to the Genesee Recreation area, and as such, requires free outdoor recreation that does not require transportation.
  5. Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission hired researchers from the University of Michigan-Flint Center for Applied Environmental Research to conduct an online survey of park users and on-site focus groups at various Genesee County parks. The on-line survey had 278 respondents and the focus groups had 357 participants. The study was designed to provide direction for the update of the Parks and Recreation Plan. The executive summary of the report is found in Appendix C, and a digital copy of the complete report is included with this plan.
- B. Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is committed to facilitating public forums in order to obtain crucial feedback from the community regarding the planning and designing of their parks. Below is a typical strategic planning process that the county employs, and has successfully lead to the development of the Bluebell Beach, Flushing, Linden, Buell and Richfield Site Master Plans.
1. Professionally perform a site inventory and analysis of the park.
  2. Using the information from the site inventory and analysis, the county facilitates a design charrette in order to publically generate three distinct site master plan concepts.
  3. Have a professional design consultant integrate the three concepts into one.
  4. Return to the community for final input on the unified design concept.
  5. Implement site master plan.

## VII. Five Year Park and Recreation Goals

- ◇ To provide for the parks and recreational facilities most needed to serve the changing needs of the public while avoiding unnecessary duplication or competition with private enterprise.
- ◇ To provide and promote a variety of quality leisure services and opportunities throughout the year in response to public needs. The Commission would like to respond to the community's need for adequate restroom amenities and adequate recreation and enrichment programming for youth, adults and senior citizens.
- ◇ Rehabilitate infrastructure within Bluebell Beach.
  - ▶ Restore the entry drive into Bluebell Beach.
  - ▶ Restore the parking lot into Bluebell Beach.
  - ▶ Refurbish existing playground equipment at Bluebell Beach to meet current playground safety codes.
  - ▶ Restore and redesign current pathway system at Bluebell Beach.
  - ▶ Refurbish existing bathroom facilities to insure safety and detour vandalism.
  - ▶ Refurbish the lighting at Bluebell Beach.
- ◇ Provide new facilities and infrastructure at Bluebell Beach.
  - ▶ Provide space for a picnic area.
  - ▶ Offer a more extensive trail system through Bluebell Beach.
  - ▶ Provide drinking fountains by tapping into the existing water main at the street.
  - ▶ Provide more playground equipment.
  - ▶ Provide landscaping elements to begin to create a sense of place and provide a more comfortable site.
  - ▶ Once the existing lighting is refurbished, investigate the need for additional lighting and then add where necessary.
- ◇ Provide new facilities at the Mound ORV Area.  
 With the elimination of some secondary trails, in combination with the removal of the circle track and the consolidation of mud bogs, it becomes critical to provide the users with a fun and challenging course that varies from visit to visit. The park needs to include program elements such as rock crawls, rock runs, moguls and timber crawls.
  - ▶ **Rock Crawl**  
 The proposed rock crawl consisting of large angular stones in the range of 1-4 tons will be located where the current circle track is. Locating the rock crawl away from the rest of the trails provides a sense of destination for users to identify with, as well as minimizing safety concerns with having hazards surprise people along open trails. The circle track area offers a significant amount of space, while the rock crawl will produce a significantly less amount of dust and noise as compared to the circle track (due to lower speeds), making it more desirable for the adjacent neighbors.
  - ▶ **Rock Run**  
 The rock run will be located at the site's exits and serve as a minor trail element but, more importantly, serve as a mud flap. These rocks will be much smaller than the rocks/boulders at the rock crawl and while the vehicles traverse the rocks to exit the site, the dirt and mud will be knocked loose from the vehicle, fall into the rocks and decrease the amount of mud

- runoff in the parking lot and adjacent wetlands. When sedimentation becomes too great for the run to be effective, a bulldozer can come in, unearth the rocks and lay them back down.
- ▶ **Log Run**  
Logs will be situated along the trail to offer another program element of difficulty. Trees that were fallen from the site can be used for this element. The logs should only be placed partially across the trail to allow users not interested in the program element to pass.
  - ▶ **Moguls**  
A variety of earth berms/mounds would be located along one of the runs and provide a change in topography, something this flat site lacks. It will also create interest, become a designation spot and offer another level of difficulty for the ORV user.
- ◇ Continue with the Park Commission's commitment to recruit community organization to help implement park improvements.
  - ◇ Continue with the Park Commission's commitment to research and apply for various applicable funding sources to help implement park improvements.
  - ◇ Continue with the Park Commission's commitment to research and apply for various applicable funding sources to help acquire park land/open space in areas of southern Genesee County where population is growing the fastest.
  - ◇ Continue with the Park Commission's commitment to provide a continuous non-motorized trail system.

## VIII. Action Program

### A. Action Plan

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is financed primarily from a one-half mil (.48625) tax levy, operational revenue, grants and donations. This tax levy is subject to rollback and changes annually. Funds are used for professional staff, operations, maintenance, facility development, supervision and planning.

Major expenditures for land acquisition and capital development over the next five years are estimated and explained in detail below.

#### 1. Five Year Financial Plan

- a. *Organizational* - The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission intends to concentrate on maintaining its existing 11,500 acres of park lands and facilities, while maximizing its revenue producing potential, where possible.
- b. *Staffing* - Currently, the Park Commission is understaffed. The table below depicts the staff/acre ratio for counties similar to Genesee County for comparison. The addition of staff needs to be addressed to meet the current needs of the park. Any additional programs or facilities will require even more staff.

Staff Comparison	Acres	Full-Time Park Maintenance Employees	Seasonal Park Maintenance Employees
Genesee County Parks	11,000	7	67
Kent County Parks	5,300	31	140
Oakland County Parks	6,000	37	176

- c. *Programming* - The outdoor education programs will continue to increase with the use of the For-Mar Nature Visitor Center and day-use parks.
- d. *Operation* - The park system operates seven days a week, 52 weeks per year and relies heavily on seasonal employees and volunteers.
- e. *Maintenance* - The Park Commission has its own maintenance staff. Supervision is provided by the park superintendent, who is a professional staff member. The maintenance staff will increase as new revenue sources are secured. Currently this department is critically understaffed. The Crossroads Village maintenance is partly raised from the Genesee County's accommodations (hotel/motel) tax and will increase as tourism at Crossroads Village increases and/or as revenue projects expand.

#### 2. Land Acquisition

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission intends to acquire land within the adopted boundaries of the Holloway Reservoir Regional Park and the Genesee Recreation Area as donations and grants become available. Acquisition of any land in the form of gifts, trust and outright donations will be given consideration as to the benefit to the total park system.

### 3. Capital Development

The capital development program for the next five years is based on the availability of funds derived from grants, gifts, donations or through the use of the revenue bond program. In the event that funds are received before the anticipated schedule, certain projects could be advanced accordingly. The capital improvement budget will be concentrated in park areas in which substantial land acquisition has been completed.

#### B. Schedule

##### 1. Year 2009

###### a. *Bluebell Beach*

- 1) Provide space for a picnic area.

Funding: Private, Donations  
Estimated Cost: \$105,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- 2) Restore and redesign current pathway system at Bluebell Beach.

Funding: T-3\*, MNRTF\*  
Estimated Cost: \$170,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- 3) Provide landscaping elements to begin to create a sense of place and provide a more comfortable site.

Funding: Donations  
Estimated Cost: \$55,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- 4) Provide more water facilities.

Funding: Grants  
Estimated Cost: \$200,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission

###### b. *Crossroads Village*

- 1) Parking lot lighting.

Funding: MNRTF\*, Local  
Estimated Cost: \$225,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- 2) Pave parking lot.

Funding: Private, Local  
Estimated Cost: \$650,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

###### c. *Mounds ORV Area*

- 1) Rock Crawl.

Funding: ORV\* grant  
Estimated Cost: \$100,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- d. *Flushing Park*
- 1) Splash Pad.
 

Funding:	T-3*
Estimated Cost:	\$150,000
Responsibility:	Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
2. Year 2010
- a. *Bluebell Beach*
- 1) Provide more playground equipment.
 

Funding:	Private, Donations
Estimated Cost:	\$85,000
Responsibility:	Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - 2) Provide drinking fountains by tapping into the existing watermain at the street.
 

Funding:	Private, Donations
Estimated Cost:	\$25,000
Responsibility:	Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - 3) Build onto the existing trail system.
 

Funding:	T-3*, MNRTF*
Estimated Cost:	\$400,000
Responsibility:	Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - 4) Provide landscaping elements to begin to create a sense of place and provide a more comfortable site.
 

Funding:	Donations
Estimated Cost:	\$30,000
Responsibility:	Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - 5) Improve entrance images including signage.
 

Funding:	Private, Donations
Estimated Cost:	\$80,000
Responsibility:	Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - 6) Expansion of aquatic facility.
 

Funding:	Private, Donations
Estimated Cost:	\$35,000
Responsibility:	Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
- b. *Richfield Park*
- 1) Apply for funding to complete renovation of park based on new site plan.
  - 2) Renovations to include:
    - ▶ Demolition of unsafe and/or outdated equipment and facilities;
    - ▶ Development of athletic/sports fields, including baseball, tennis, soccer and basketball;
    - ▶ Development of adequate restroom facilities;
    - ▶ Renovation/restoration of picnic areas, including picnic shelters, pavilions and site amenities;
    - ▶ Redevelopment of active play areas;
    - ▶ Initiate process for historical designation of CCC/WPA facilities;
    - ▶ Phase I lighting plan;

- ▶ Phase I entrance image improvements, including signage and roads;
  - ▶ Phase I multi-use path/trail development.
- Funding: MNRTF\*, LWCF\*, Local Funds  
 Estimated Cost: Phase I - \$750.00  
 Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

c. *Flushing Park*

- 1) Apply for funding and complete Phase I improvements to park based on new site plan.
- 2) Phase I renovations to include:
  - ▶ Demolition of unsafe, outdated equipment and amenities;
  - ▶ Redevelopment of active play areas, including playground equipment to meet ADA and CPSC guidelines;
  - ▶ Phase I lighting improvements to meet CPTED standards;
  - ▶ Phase I improvements/development of adequate restroom facilities;
  - ▶ Upgrade existing soccer fields;
  - ▶ Phase I entrance improvements;
  - ▶ Initiate process for historical designation of CCC/WPA facilities;
  - ▶ Phase I landscaping improvements.

Funding: MNRTF\*, LWCF\*, Local Funds  
 Estimated Cost: Phase I - \$300,000  
 Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

d. *For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum*

- 1) Shoreline stabilization.
 

Funding: Private, Local  
 Estimated Cost: \$125,000  
 Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

e. *Walleye Pike Boat Launch*

- 1) Control Station.
 

Funding: MNRTF\*, Local  
 Estimated Cost: \$70,000  
 Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

f. *Mounds ORV Area*

- 1) Rock Crawl
 

Funding: ORV Grant  
 Estimated Cost: \$100,000  
 Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

3. Year 2011

a. *Bluebell Beach*

- 1) Build onto the existing trail system.
 

Funding: T-3\*, MNRTF\*  
 Estimated Cost: \$150,000  
 Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- 2) Improve signage.  
Funding: Private, Donations  
Estimated Cost: \$80,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
- 3) Restore the entry drive into Bluebell Beach.  
Funding: MNRTF\*  
Estimated Cost: \$300,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
- 4) Restore the parking lot into Bluebell Beach.  
Funding: Private, Donations  
Estimated Cost: \$400,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

b. *Linden Park*

- 1) Phase II Improvements
  - ▶ Develop trails area, including path clearing, paving, retaining wall, seating, bridges, signage, maintenance building improvements;
  - ▶ Develop soccer area, including fencing, entry feature and signage;
  - ▶ Develop children’s play area, including play equipment, site amenities, surfacing, signage and landscaping;
  - ▶ Develop sports area, including grading, utilities, sports fields, sports courts, parking, sidewalk, road, landscaping, restrooms and signage;
  - ▶ Develop events area, including utilities, grading, roads, parking, paths, landscaping and fencing;
  - ▶ Improve park entrance, including signage, landscaping and fencing.

Funding: MNRTF\*, LWCF\*, Local Funds  
Estimated Cost: \$6,000,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

c. *Cummings Center*

- 1) Develop master site plan utilizing local input, with special focus on special user groups.
- 2) Apply for funding to complete Phase I renovations.
- 3) Phase I renovations to include:
  - ▶ Required infrastructure updates (mechanical, electrical, etc.) to existing structures;
  - ▶ Construction of adequate restroom/concessions facilities;
  - ▶ Development of multi-use pathways;
  - ▶ Construction of adequate storage facilities;
  - ▶ Restoration of grandstands and arena.

Funding: Public/Private Partnerships, LWCF\*, Local  
Estimated Cost: \$1,250,000  
Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

4. Year 2012

a. *Bluebell Beach*

- 1) Refurbish the lighting at Bluebell Beach.

Funding: Private, Donations

Estimated Cost: \$30,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- 2) Once the existing lighting is refurbished, investigate the need for additional lighting and add where necessary.

Funding: Private, Donations

Estimated Cost: \$30,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- 3) Provide landscaping elements.

Funding: Donations

Estimated Cost: \$25,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

b. *Walleye Pike Boat Launch*

- 1) Larger Parking Lot.

Funding: MNRTF\*, Local

Estimated Cost: \$50,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

c. *For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum*

- 1) Replace one vehicular bridge.

Funding: Private

Estimated Cost: \$250,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

d. *Buttercup Beach*

- 1) *Bath house.*

Funding: MNRTF\*, Local

Estimated Cost: \$350,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

e. *Wolverine Campground*

- 1) Shoreline stabilization.

Funding: MNRTF\*, Local

Estimated Cost: \$250,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

f. *Elba Equestrian Center*

- 1) Develop master site plan utilizing local input.

- 2) Apply for funding to improve area(s), camping facilities and facility entrances.

Funding: Public/Private Partnerships, LWCF\*, Local Funds

Estimated Cost: \$600,000

Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- g. *Trails/Pathways*
    - 1) Apply for funding to implement Phase II improvements to trails/pathways as identified by system-wide trails/pathway plan.
      - Funding: LWCF\*, Local, Public/Private Partnerships
      - Estimated Cost: \$250,000
      - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - h. *Goldenrod Disc Golf Course*
    - 1) Stairway and practice tee.
      - Funding: MNRTF\*, Local
      - Estimated Cost: \$100,000
      - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - i. *Crossroads Village*
    - 1) Orientation building.
      - Funding: Private
      - Estimated Cost: \$2,500,000
      - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - j. *Toboggan Hill*
    - 1) Vault toilet.
      - Funding: MNRTF\*, Local
      - Estimated Cost: \$30,000
      - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
5. Year 2013
- a. *Bluebell Beach*
    - 1) Provide more playground equipment.
      - Funding: Private, Donations
      - Estimated Cost: \$40,000
      - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
    - 2) Provide landscaping elements.
      - Funding: Donations
      - Estimated Cost: \$30,000
      - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  - b. *Cummings Center*
    - 1) Apply for funding to assist with implementation of Phase II of master site development plan.
    - 2) Renovations to include:
      - ▶ Phase II entrance improvements;
      - ▶ Parking area improvements;
      - ▶ Complete required infrastructure upgrades;
      - ▶ Construction of activities center building.
      - Funding: Public/Private Partnerships, LWCF\*, Local
      - Estimated Cost: \$1,250,000
      - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

- c. *Mill Street Warehouse*
  - 1) Kitchen improvements.
    - Funding: Private
    - Estimated Cost: \$180,000
    - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  
- d. *Crossroads Village*
  - 1) Add/upgrade utilities.
    - Funding: Private
    - Estimated Cost: \$600,000
    - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  
- e. *Wolverine Campground*
  - 1) Add full hook-up sites.
    - Funding: Bonds
    - Estimated Cost: \$600,000
    - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  
- f. *Davison Roadside Park*
  - 1) Modern restroom building.
    - Funding: MNRTF\*, Local
    - Estimated Cost: \$250,000
    - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
  
- g. *Toboggan Hill*
  - 1) Toboggan runs.
    - Funding: MNRTF\*
    - Estimated Cost: \$225,000
    - Responsibility: Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

\*Funding Source Abbreviations

MNRTF..... Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund  
 ORV ..... Off Road Vehicle Grants  
 LWCF ..... Land and Water Conservation Fund  
 T-3..... Transportation Enhancement Funding  
 (through Michigan Department of Transportation)

## IX. Strategies to Address Local, State or National Concerns

- ◇ Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission works diligently with the surrounding communities to combine efforts in all aspects of this plan. The City of Flint acknowledges the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission within its Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan, and supports the efforts of the county for its improvement plans for Bluebell Beach.
- ◇ The improvements to Bluebell Beach are directed at citizens who reside in economically distressed areas, and will improve or create access to Bluebell Beach for the minority groups and the low income population.
- ◇ Employment opportunities are not significant within this plan.
- ◇ By providing greater access to its parks and their natural resources, this plan addresses the need for human/environment interaction. The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is dedicated to enhancing and protecting the environment with all its endeavors, and this includes environmentally considerate design and construction at Bluebell Beach.
- ◇ This plan targets the financially struggling community of the City of Flint. Any improvements to this facility will parallel the revitalization efforts within the city's infrastructure, and become a critical and positive component for the community.
- ◇ Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission understands the importance of community volunteers, and has an established volunteer program in order to continue with this endeavor. The park will also continue its efforts to seek additional sources in grant funding.
- ◇ Genesee County Parks and Recreation and the City of Flint are currently enhancing and expanding its trail system adjacent to Bluebell Beach. With these trails complete, neighborhood communities that have no recreational facilities will be able to access Bluebell Beach.
- ◇ Private park enhancement for the park's service area is not feasible, and thus is not a significant component within this plan.
- ◇ The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission does not foresee the funds to purchase additional land for recreation, and thus is not a significant component within this plan.
- ◇ Bluebell Beach resides on Mott Lake, and any improvements to this facility will ultimately improve access to the waterfront. Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission maintains its high standards of environment quality, and those standards have established and guide the current design and construction practices for the park system.
- ◇ Additional marketing to make participants aware of the extent of the Genesee County Park system and what activities the different locations offer.

### Conclusions and Implications

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is an important and vital part of the quality of life for the residents of Genesee County. In fact, the mission of the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is to provide affordable, quality recreational facilities and programs to all the citizens of Genesee County, and to act as a conservator of publicly-held recreational lands and facilities, historical structures and educational facilities. The purpose of this five year plan is to provide direction for the park system to meet both its mission and its vision of providing quality recreational opportunities for all.