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## Chapter 7: Existing Facility Recommendations

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## County Farm Park and Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center

### Description

County Farm Park and the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center are the two Washtenaw County Park Facilities located within the City of Ann Arbor, the population center of Washtenaw County. The Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center is the WCPRC's lone indoor recreation facility and is the most heavily used County Park facility.

### Facilities

#### Recreation Center

- Indoor pool
- Gymnasium
- Cardiovascular exercise room
- Indoor track
- Locker rooms
- Meeting room/exercise studio

#### County Farm Park

- Nature trails
- Fitness course
- Picnic shelters
- Project Grow community gardens
- Rest rooms
- Equipment storage barn
- Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Administrative offices

### Issues:

- Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center is heavily used, particularly in the winter, and adequate parking is a constant problem.



- Due to heavy use of the Recreation Center, the facility and equipment needs more frequent repair and replacement
- There is a desire for additional exercise equipment and space within the Recreation Center.
- Off-leash dogs cause frequent complaints.
- No connection between County Farm Park and Buhr Park to the south.
- The proliferation of invasive and native woody plants threatens to change the character of the park by encroaching on the meadow areas.

### ***Action Items***

1. Expand the parking areas at the Recreation Center and County Farm Park for use by Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center users.
2. Relocate the mobile maintenance crew to an alternative facility.
3. Develop an accessible children's playground area.
4. Renovate or replace the air conditioning at the Recreation Center.
5. Repair or replace the Medford picnic shelter.
6. Renovate and improve the trail system.
7. Explore the possibility of designating a portion of the park for an off-leash dog park facility.
8. Explore the possibility of enclosing the patio for additional recreation space.
9. Explore the feasibility of acquiring the current site of the Washtenaw County Juvenile Center (2270 Platt Road) to provide an opportunity for the expansion of County Farm Park."

## Cavanaugh Lake County Park

### Description

This small park located on the shore of Lake Cavanaugh in Sylvan Township is one of the smallest Washtenaw County Park and Recreation facilities. The park is actually divided into two parts, with the parking area, rest rooms and majority of the park acreage located on the south side of Cavanaugh Lake Road. The main developed features of the park - picnic shelters, picnic tables, play equipment and benches are all located on the shoreline of Lake Cavanaugh, to the north of Cavanaugh Lake Road.

The majority of park visitors are from the surrounding townships and areas west of U.S. 23. The nature experience at Cavanaugh Lake Park was rated as very satisfactory by the majority of survey respondents.

### Issues:

- Site is bisected by Cavanaugh Lake Road.
- Neighbors oppose use of site for boat launch or swimming area.
- Maintenance is problematic/inefficient due to remote location and small size of park
- Large grass area requires frequent mowing

### *Action Items:*

1. Improve park signage.
2. Repair and renovate picnic shelter, tables and grills.
3. Replace and/or repair the playground equipment.
4. Replace the lawn area on the south side of Cavanaugh Lake Road with a wildflower meadow.



5. Explore the possibility of improving the wells at the park.
6. Explore the opportunity for collaborative management with Sylvan Township.

## Independence Lake County Park

### Description

Independence Lake County Park is the second largest Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission facility in total acreage. Located in Webster Township, the park's main features include two sandy beach swimming areas (one reserved for group activities), the spray zone water feature, numerous picnic areas and shelters and boating opportunities. The park has both paved, multi-use trails and unpaved nature trails in addition to a limited-horsepower boat launch, fishing docks and play structures. Construction on a new-year round building began in the fall of 2003. The new facility will replace the existing Beach Center building and will serve as the new park headquarters. The building will also include expanded concessions (food and boat rentals) and will feature an indoor meeting room for environmental education and recreational programming. Additional property has recently been acquired that includes natural areas and wetland habitats.

### Facilities

- Sandy beach swimming areas (2)
- Spray zone water play area
- Changing area and rest rooms
- Boat rentals
- Food concession
- Non-motorized boat launch
- Paved multi-use trail
- Nature trails
- Picnic areas and shelters
- Group rental picnic shelters/areas (4)
- Children's playgrounds
- Maintenance and storage buildings
- Indoor meeting room
- Park headquarters building



- Fishing pier

**Issues:**

- Underutilized during winter months.
- Limited number of special events
- Natural features of the facility are great for environmental education; however, there are limited opportunities for year-round programming.

***Action Items***

1. Increase and develop year-round use at the site. Explore the possibility for the development of a cross country skiing center with skating, groomed ski trails, ice fishing, snowshoeing and winter sports instruction.
2. Extend the paved multi-use trail to connect with the gate house.
3. Renovate the Group Center building.
4. Develop nature and interpretive opportunities at the Gosline property.
5. Repair and expand the existing fence around the park border.
6. Improve the lawn drainage at the Main Beach area.
7. Provide electricity to the gate house.
8. Upgrade existing playgrounds to fully accessible play areas.
9. Repair/replace beach retaining wall at Main Beach and the Group Center.
10. Explore the possibility of rebuilding volleyball courts for league play.

## Osborne Mills Preserve

### Description

Osborne Mills Preserve is located in Scio Township and is adjacent to the Delhi Metropark (HCMA). The preserve has limited accessibility from Delhi Road, but contains valuable Huron River shoreline frontage, making it an important resource conservation preserve. WCPRC operates interpretive nature programs at Osborne Mills.



### Facilities

- Nature Trails

### Issues:

- There is limited and inadequate signage.
- Access to the facility from Delhi Road is limited due to adjacent private property.
- Limited access prevents the development of additional amenities such as restrooms and trailhead staging areas.
- Limited non-motorized connectivity due to adjacent private property.
- No off-street parking area.



### *Action Items*

1. Maintain the park as a nature preserve.
2. Continue to explore the possibility of acquiring trail easements to link to the larger Huron River Greenway network.
3. Continue working with neighbors to pursue the purchase of additional property to improve public access to the park.
4. Develop interpretive and/or trail signage.



5. Add signage for canoeists and kayakers.

## Park Lyndon

### Description

Park Lyndon is the largest of the WCPRC facilities, as well as being one of the least developed for active human use. The park is 335 acres in size and is primarily a nature preserve area. The natural areas contain a wide array of landscape types, including fens, lowland swamp, forested uplands, wet meadows, prairie-like fields and marshlands. There is a wide range of plant and animal species native to the park, including rare, threatened and endangered species. WCPRC operates many interpretive nature programs at Park Lyndon.

The park itself is divided into Park Lyndon North and Park Lyndon South. These two areas are separated by North Territorial Road. Park Lyndon North is the larger of the two parcels. The two parks are linked by the Pinckney-Waterloo Trail (formerly known as the Potawatomi Trail).

### Facilities

- Nature trails network with connection to the Potawatomi Trail.
- Picnic shelters
- Restrooms
- Children's play equipment
- Trail cabin/shelter

### Issues:

- Remote location of the park relative to WCPRC Headquarters, maintenance is inefficient.
- Sensitive natural resources.
- Good non-motorized connectivity due to link with the Pinckney-Waterloo Trail.
- Link between Pinckney State Recreation Area to the north and the Waterloo State Recreation Area to the south.



### ***Action Items***

1. Complete a Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) of the site.
2. Improve trails and interpretive signage and build trailhead kiosk.
3. Improve trails by widening and removing new brush growth.
4. Renovate bathroom facility at Lyndon South.
5. Explore the possibility of renting the trail cabin to scout and camp groups.
6. Renovate and repair trail cabin.
7. Provide access to the former Reith property.
8. Explore the possibility of adding winter recreation activities such as cross country-skiing and or snowshoeing.
9. Explore the possibility of developing a designated primitive campground area at Lyndon South.

## Park Northfield

### Description

Park Northfield is a small, 12 acre park located in Northfield Township. The park is somewhat secluded and is geared toward informal play and picnicking. There is a rest room and picnic shelter, in addition to a trail network and children's play equipment.

Signage is difficult to see from Pontiac Trail due to the high traffic speeds and overgrown vegetation in the drainage ditch. This lack of clear signage makes the park blend into the surrounding property. Internal park signage is lacking or inadequate and the internal nature trails are overgrown and lack identification. Park Northfield is one of the least visited parks in the WCPRC network.

### Facilities

- Picnic shelter
- Rest room
- Children's play equipment
- Open playfield area
- Nature trails

### Issues:

- External park signage needs improvement
- Internal signage for trails is inadequate
- Trails not clearly designated
- Security and safety are a concern
- Underutilized facility
- Large grass area requires frequent mowing
- Current use requires a disproportionate amount of maintenance
- This park does not currently meet WCPRC standards.



### ***Action Items***

1. Explore the possibility of developing an off-leash dog-park facility.
2. Replace and improve park signage.
3. Renovate entrance drive.
4. Renovate and improve restroom facility.
5. Renovate trails.
6. Build a trailhead kiosk with trail map.

## Parker Mill County Park

### Description

Parker Mill County Park is located on the border of Ann Arbor and Superior Townships and contains historic and natural resources. The main feature of the site is a working grist mill, that is open for tours during the fall months. The park is located at the junction of Fleming Creek and the Huron River and is adjacent to Forest Park, a property leased by WCPRC from the City of Ann Arbor. The WCPRC provides access to and maintains Forest Park as part of the 99-year lease agreement with the City of Ann Arbor.



### Facilities

- Paved multi-use trail, Hoyt G. Post Trail and boardwalk and unpaved nature trails which connect to the Huron River greenway system
- Working grist and cider mills
- One of the oldest log cabins in Washtenaw County
- Picnic area
- Restrooms
- Interpretive historical and nature exhibits



### Issues:

- Limited activities for young children
- Historic buildings are in need of renovation and repair



### *Action Items*

1. Continue working with the University of Michigan and Ann Arbor Township to develop a passive, nature and interpretive trail, creating a connection to the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens.



2. Develop living history exhibit by replacing turf areas with wheat and barley.
3. Renovate the log cabin.
4. Explore the possibility of adding a small children's playground area.
5. Explore paving the existing parking area.

## Pierce Lake Golf Course and Park

### Description

Located in the Village of Chelsea, Pierce Lake opened in 1996. The facility's main feature is an 18-hole, par 72 championship golf course. Pierce Lake is the only County-operated golf facility.

Additionally, there are 26 acres of dedicated parkland with a picnic shelter, a boardwalk and a nature trail around a portion of Pierce Lake.

### Facilities

- 18 hole, par 72 golf course
- Golf pro shop and concession building
- Paved multi-use trail
- Boardwalks and observation decks
- Picnic shelter, tables and grills

### Issues:

- Limited space for expansion of clubhouse facilities
- There are no locker room facilities which hurt the chances of attracting tournaments and outings
- Golf is the main focus of the facility and causes the park to often be underutilized
- Popularity of golf is in a cyclical decline, putting financial pressures on many courses in the region
- Chemicals and fertilizers used for course maintenance require careful storage and maintenance.
- Park has no room for expansion of recreational opportunities beyond walking trails and picnic area
- Limited winter use.



### ***Action Items***

1. Explore the feasibility of developing men's and women's locker room facilities adjacent to existing clubhouse.
2. Develop separate and secure storage areas for chemicals and fertilizer and build storage area for bulk items such as sand and topsoil.
3. Place curbing around cart paths adjacent to all tees and greens.
4. Improve bridges on cart paths.
5. Explore the possibility of enlarging selected tees and/or greens.
6. Renovate and repair cart barn and maintenance building.
7. Explore the feasibility of developing an event center.

## Rolling Hills County Park and Water Park

### Description

This 150 acre site in Ypsilanti Township is easily accessible to both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, the major population concentrations in the County. The park is on the southern fringe of urban development and is an important source of recreational space for residents of the southern and eastern portions of the County.

Rolling Hills is the second most visited County Park according to the 2003 survey of County residents. A significant increase in park visits are anticipated following the completion of the water park improvements during the summer of 2003. Rolling Hills draws a majority of its visitors from east of U.S. 23, with 37% from the City of Ypsilanti and another 16% from the outlying eastern townships.

### Facilities

- Water park
- Lazy River ride
- Tube ride
- 2 water slides
- 2 spray play areas
- Wading pool
- Sand play area
- Food concessions
- Picnic shelters
- Volleyball
- Paved multi-use and unpaved nature trails
- Cross-country ski trails
- Sledding hill
- Fishing docks
- 9 hole disc golf course



**Issues:**

- Lack of non-motorized connections to the population bases of Ann Arbor, Saline and Ypsilanti
- Most family and teen-oriented outdoor WCPRC facility
- Ability to handle special events and large groups
- Geared toward more active recreation

***Action Items***

1. Develop non-motorized trail connections to adjacent communities and activity centers.
2. Explore the possibility of expanding the water park to include additional water features.
3. Expand the disc golf course and explore the possibility of developing a disc golf center with multiple courses.
4. Explore the possibility of developing a winter ice skating facility.
5. Expand winter activities to include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and sledding.
6. Explore the possibility of developing a skate park facility.
7. Explore the possibility of developing an area devoted to field and court games.
8. Improve pond habitat and stock pond with appropriate game fish.
9. Determine the feasibility of developing an adventure (miniature) golf center.

## Sharon Mills County Park

### Description

This historic mill was originally built in 1835 and later restored by Henry Ford in the 1930s. The mill is located on the River Raisin in Sharon Township and is the lone park facility in the southwest portion of the County.

In addition to being a significant historic building (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and an important cultural resource for Washtenaw County residents, the location on the River Raisin is of prime ecological importance. The facility is currently used as both a cultural and historical museum and for environmental education programming.

### Facilities

- Historic mill buildings
- Restrooms
- Picnic shelter
- Cultural, historical and environmental interpretive exhibits
- Canoe launch
- Outdoor staging area

### Issues:

- Only WCPRC in southwestern portion of the County
- Lacks a trail connection to population centers in Chelsea and Manchester
- Outstanding cultural and environmental resources
- Opportunities for expanded rental and special event use.



### ***Action Items***

1. Explore the possibility of acquiring additional land adjacent to the park for natural area preservation, resource conservation and/or park expansion.
2. Enhance indoor interpretive displays and exhibits.
3. Develop a Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) of the site.
4. Explore the possibility of developing a water “greenway” - a canoe/kayak network with designated portage areas and launch facilities.
5. Explore the opportunity to expand parking.

## Staebler Farm

### Description

WCPRC acquired Staebler Farm in Superior Township with the intention of one day developing the land as a park facility. The land is currently in active agriculture and is not open to the general public. WCPRC has an agreement with the original landowner allowing continued residence on the site. The land can be developed as public parkland when the landowner vacates the property.

### Facilities

- Farm buildings
- Agricultural fields
- Ponds
- Woodlands

### Issues:

- Site is bisected by Plymouth Road

### *Action Items*

1. Explore the possibility of acquiring additional land adjacent to the park for natural area preservation, resource conservation, agricultural preservation and/or park expansion.
2. Develop a Master Plan for the property.



## Superior Center Park

### Description

Superior Center Park is the smallest of the WCPRC owned and operated facilities. Just an acre in size, the corner park parcel at the intersection of Prospect and Cherry Hill Road, offers only picnicking.



### Facilities

- Picnic tables
- Grills

### Issues

- There are limited facilities - only a few picnic tables, grills and a trash receptacle
- Survey respondents indicated a general dissatisfaction with the cleanliness and maintenance of the facility.
- Kimmel Drain runs through the site, limited development possibilities
- Large grass area requires frequent mowing
- Small size of site offers limited use potential
- No trail or pathway connections to population base in nearby Ypsilanti



### ***Action Items***

1. Explore the possibility of developing a collaborative management strategy for the park with Superior Township.
2. Install additional picnic tables.

## Improvement Schedule by Park

Item	Cost	Year	Funding
<b>County Farm Park</b>			
Medford Shelter replacement	\$70,000	2004	O
Install Children's Playground	\$75,000-\$100,000	2004	O
Relocate mobile maintenance crew	\$10,000-\$100,000	2005	G, P, O
<b>Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center</b>			
Expansion Feasibility Study	\$25,000	2004	O
Expand Parking	\$75,000 - \$150,000	2005	O
Repair or replace AC	\$25,000 - \$100,000	2005	G, P
<b>Cavanaugh Lake</b>			
Improve signage	\$3,000	2005	O
Replace shelter and site furnishings	\$7,000	2005	O
Replace playground equipment	\$5,000	2006	O
<b>Independence Lake</b>			
Repair and expand border fencing	\$25,000 - \$40,000	2004	O
Re-roof vault toilets	\$2,000	2005	O
Re-roof Independence Woods Pavilion	\$4,000	2005	O
Improve drainage at Main Beach area	\$10,000-\$20,000	2006	O
Repair beach retaining walls	\$20,000 - \$35,000	2006	O,G,P
Extend paved, multi-use trail	\$200,000 - \$500,000	2007	O,G,P
Repair boardwalk and add observation decks	\$4,000	2007	O,G,P
Renovate Gamble Group Center Pavilion	\$30,000 - \$50,000	2008	O
<b>Osborne Mills Preserve</b>			
Improved signage and trail kiosk	\$3,000	2005	O,G,P
Develop interpretational signage	\$3,000	2005	O
Complete MNFI	\$10,000	2005	O,P
Acquire additional access	TBD	ongoing	O,G,P

**Improvement Schedule by Park (continued)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Park Lyndon</b>			
Complete MNFI	\$10,000	2004	O,P
Renovate rest rooms	\$10,000 - \$60,000	2004	O, P
Develop access road to Reith addition	\$20,000 - \$30,000	2004	O
Renovate trail cabin	\$10,000	2005	G, P
Improve signage (including interpretive signage)	\$10,000	2006	G, P
Develop trails and observation deck(s) at Reith addition	\$100,000 - \$250,000	2007	O,G
<b>Park Northfield</b>			
		2007	
Develop off-leash dog park facility and necessary improvements	\$35,000 - \$100,000	2004	O,P
Improve signage	\$3,000	2004	O
Build trailhead kiosk	\$1,500	2004	O
Renovate restrooms	\$5,000 - \$60,000	2006	O
<b>Parker Mill</b>			
Design and build Fleming Creek Trail	\$775,000	2004	O
Construct children's playground	\$25,000 - \$100,000	2005	O, P
Add additional interpretive signage	\$10,000	2005	O,P
Renovate log cabin	\$10,000	2006	O,P
<b>Pierce Lake</b>			
Study feasibility of "12-month" event facility and locker room facilities	\$10,000	2004	O
Build separate and secure storage area for chemicals and bulk materials	\$75,000 - \$100,000	2005	O
Renovate and repair cart/maintenance barn	\$5,000 - \$10,000	2005	O
Add cart path curbing around all tee and green areas	\$25,000	2007	P, O
Improve bridges	\$25,000 - \$75,000	2007	P,O

**Improvement Schedule by Park (continued)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Rolling Hills</b>			
Expand Disc Golf Course to 18 holes	\$30,000	2004	O
Study feasibility of skate park facility and skating opportunities	\$10,000	2005	O
Adventure Golf	\$350,000 - \$400,000	2005	O
Explore winter activity facility	\$5,000	2005	O
Renovate children's playground	\$15,000 - \$40,000	2006	O
Develop court sports area	\$50,000 - \$100,000	2008	O
Water park expansion	\$1,000,000 - \$4,000,000	2008	G, P, O
<b>Sharon Mills</b>			
Complete MNFI	\$10,000	2004	O,P
Enhance interpretive displays & exhibits	\$10,000	2005	P, G
Acquire additional property	TBD	ongoing	O
<b>Staebler Farm</b>			
Develop Master Plan	\$50,000	2005	O
<b>Superior Center</b>			
Improve signage	\$1,500	2004	G, P
Study transfer of park management to Superior Township	\$1,000	2004	O, P
<b>General Items - Ongoing</b>			
Greenway development	TBD		O
Land acquisition	TBD		O
Recreation Summit	TBD		O,P
Acquire parkland in under-served portion of County	TBD		O
Develop natural resource management plans for WCPRC-administered land	TBD		O
Invasive species control	TBD		O
Partnership outreach	TBD		O

O Operating Budget Funds

G Grant Funds

