

Prairieville Township
Parks and Recreation Commission
Master Plan
2021-2026

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Community Description

This master plan focuses on providing recreational opportunities to the residents of Prairieville Township and its visitors. The township is located in the southwest corner of Barry County. The content of this plan will address the current status and future developments of each of the sites managed by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The community is a combination of farming enterprises (large and small), retirees of whom many live on the surrounding lakes, members of the community who commute in an approximate 50 mile radius (Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Holland, Lansing, and some further who are working remotely).

The age of residents includes families with young children, working age adults, and a large population of retirees. It also has residents with pets who are often involved with them in their recreation.

The community has a wide range of recreational interests of land, water, and air activities. Popular community recreation on land is walking, playing pickle ball, disc golf, and year round activity in all types of weather. Water interests are in boating and fishing, swimming, scuba and other activities, again this is year round activity in many cases, especially ice fishing. Air space activities are also becoming more popular with kite flying and remote plane or drones.

Prairieville Township is served by Delton-Kellogg, Gull Lake Community and Plainwell Community Schools. The combined school recreational facilities that are available to township residents in these schools include nature trails, softball fields, playground equipment, basketball hoops, tennis courts, track, swimming and diving, soccer fields.

Administrative Structure

Within the administrative structure illustrated below, the Prairieville Parks and Recreation Commission performs a number of functions as authorized by the State of Michigan under Public Act 157 of 1905 and as amended by the Prairieville Township Board of Trustees. These roles include supervision of staff and volunteers, developing and implementing annual performance goals, developing and implementing annual operational budgets and assisting the recreation director develop special projects.

Prairieville Township Electorate

Township Board of Trustees

Parks and Recreation

Chair - Vice Chair - Secretary - Treasurer - Recreation Director

Parks Staff

Parks Manager - Assistant Manager - Park Attendants

Committees

Volunteers

Current Prairieville Township Boards Members

Jim Stoneburner, Supervisor
Judy Pence, Treasurer
Rod Goebel, Clerk
Ted DeVries, Trustee
Mark Doster, Trustee

Board supports Parks & Recreation Commission in processing payroll, selling park passes, depositing parks funds and assigning fund accounts, processing invoices and issuing checks, and providing monthly reports.

Current Prairieville Township Parks & Recreation Commission Members

Joanna Haneckow, Chairperson
Kevin Loudon, Vice Chairperson
Scott Kuebler, Recreation Director
Judy Risdon, Secretary
John Kurak, Treasurer

The five (5) member commission provides program direction and guidance to a paid staff which includes a Parks Manager, Assistant Parks Manager and Park Attendants. It also supervises volunteer projects as needed.

Prairieville Township Parks & Recreation Commission develops an annual budget in accordance with Township budget approval procedures; and expends budgeted funds for parks operation and maintenance. It may approve rental contracts for use of its sites in cooperation with Township Board of Trustees and may accept properties acquired by gift, purchase, lease or other agreement for its use. The primary revenue stream is generated by parks usage fees collected at four sites. Township may supplement these funds to finance special projects.

Status of Grant Assistance Provided to
Prairieville Township Parks and Recreation

We were awarded a Department of Natural Resources matching funds grant in the amount of \$128,803.50 (50% of cost) in 2018 for installation of new boat launches at Gull Lake Park. We were also recipients of a Barry County grant in 2020 for \$10,000 for installation of 3 (three) pickle ball and 1 (one) basketball court where there was previously a badly worn and cracked tennis court area.

Relationships with Public or Private Organizations

Prairieville Township Parks & Recreation maintains ongoing relationships with organizations such as our Police Department, Department of Natural Resources, local school districts, North Country Trail (NCT) administration, and lake associations. We provide access for high school fishing team, post any items we have on the local lake association sites, work with NCT to increase use of our Municipal and Parker road sites on their trail, invite our local DNR as needed for education at our meetings, and other interactions as they are needed or requested.

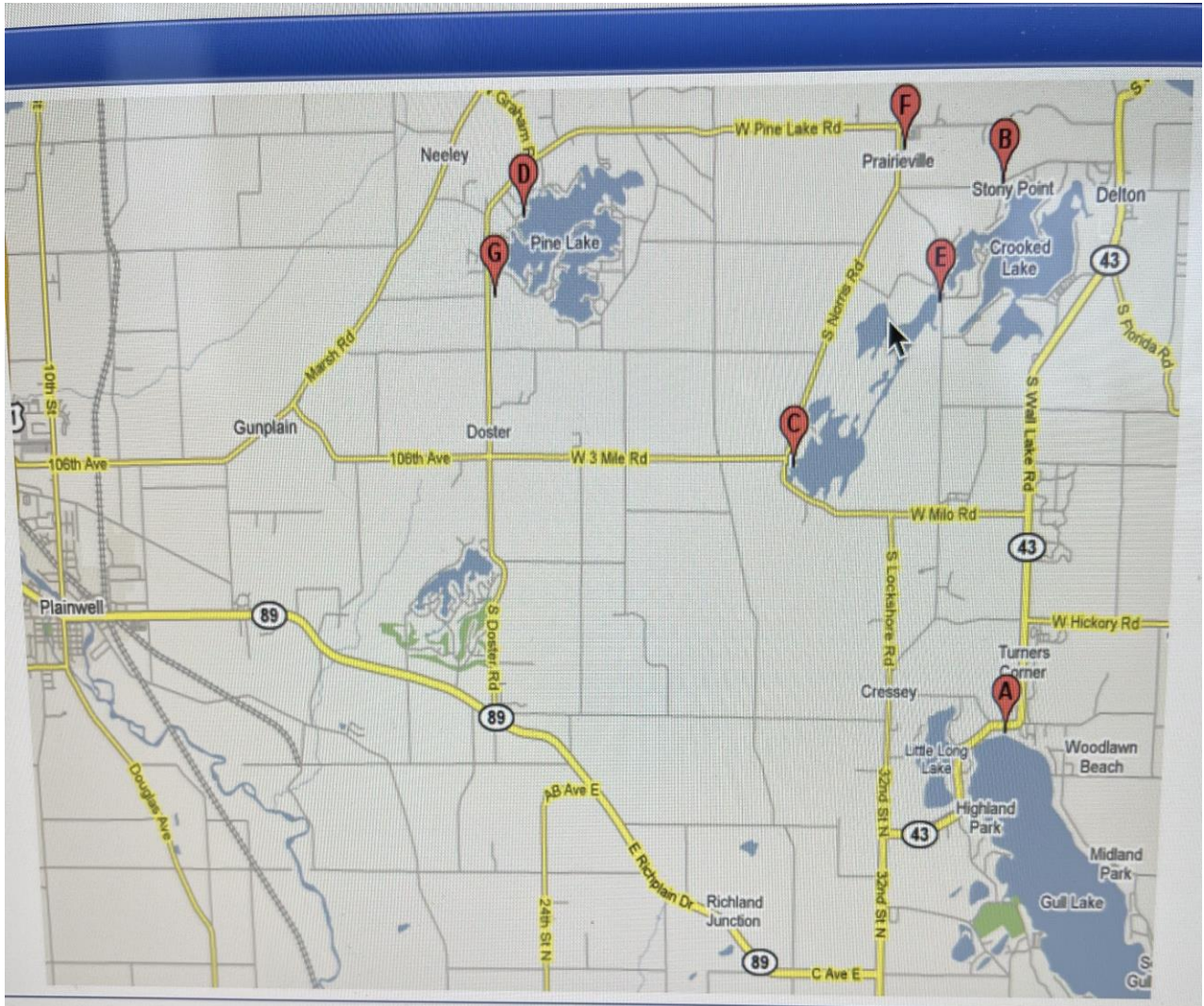
Parks and Recreation Inventory

An inventory is maintained of the seven (7) sites and the recreational activities provided. Annually the Parks and Recreation Commission members conduct an inspection of all sites.

Two (2) of the commissioner's seven (7) sites are operated with lease partners. The land area encompassing Parker Road Park is utilized under terms of a leasing agreement with Michigan State University. Gull Lake Park is managed according to the terms of a lease with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Refer to the map below for locations and refer to the detail described. The summary of the most recent inspection conducted in conjunction of ADA is located in the appendices.

Map with Locations of Parks



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- A. Gull Lake Park - 15457 M43 Highway, Hickory Corners, MI 49060
- B. Upper Crooked Lake Park - 7317 Delton Road, Delton, MI 49046
- C. Lower Crooked Lake - 13000 Norris Road, Plainwell, MI 49080
- D. Pine Lake Center Street Park - 10732 Center Street, Plainwell, MI 49080
- E. Parker Road Park - At intersection of Oak Drive, Delton, MI 49046
- F. Prairieville Municipal Park - 11019 S. Norris Road, Delton, MI 49046
- G. Pine Lake Recreation - 11481 Doster Road, Plainwell, MI 49080

A: Gull Lake Park

Rate of Usage: high

Size: Three (3) acres

Purpose: boat launch, swimming, fishing, playground, picnicking

Service Area: Prairieville Township and multi-county

Facility Features: hard surface boat launch ramp with two (2) docks, floating fishing dock, swimming beach, picnic area with tables and grills, multi-use deck area, playground, bathhouse with flush toilets and sinks, lighted paved parking area, courtesy refuse containers, automated entrance and exit.

Accessibility Status: ADA compliant

Physical Condition: Good

B: Upper Crooked Lake Park

Rate of Usage: high

Size: one (1) acre

Purpose: boat launch and picnicking

Service Area: multi-county

Facility Features: hard surface boat launch with one dock, self boat wash, picnic tables, courtesy trash, portable toilet, lighted parking area

Accessibility Status: Toilet and Ramp improvements to be made

Physical Condition: Acceptable

C: Lower Crooked Lake Park

Rate of Usage: moderate

Size: two (2) acres

Purpose: boat launch

Service Area: multi community

Facility Features: natural surface ramp with one dock, portable toilet unit, courtesy refuse container, unpaved parking area

Accessibility Status: Toilet and Ramp improvements to be made

Physical Condition: Acceptable

D: Pine Lake Center Street Park

Rate of Usage: high

Size: one (1) acre

Purpose: boat launch

Service Area: multi-community and county

Facility Features: natural surface launch ramp with one dock, portable toilet unit, courtesy refuse container, unpaved parking area

Accessibility Status: Toilet and Ramp improvements to be made

Physical Condition: Good

E: Parker Road Park

Rate of Usage: low

Size: one (1) acre

Purpose: fishing, North Country Trail stop, and wildlife observation

Service Area: multi-community

Facility Features: walking trail to lake, unpaved parking lot, picnic table

Accessibility Status: Toilet and Fishing Access improvements to be made

Physical Condition: Acceptable

F: Municipal Park in Prairieville

Rate of Usage: low

Size: five (5) acres

Purpose: softball/baseball diamond, picnic area, playground,

North Country Trail hiking stop

Service Area: neighborhood and multi-county

Facility Features: softball/baseball diamond with bleacher seating, picnic shelter and table, portable unit toilet, playground area fenced, courtesy refuse container, unpaved parking lot

Accessibility Status: Toilet improvements to be made

Physical Condition: Good

G: Pine Lake Recreation Area

Rate of Usage: high

Size: eighteen (18) acres

Purpose: pickle ball, disc golf, hiking, softball/baseball, dog walk, basketball, volleyball, picnicking, biking stop

Service Area: multi-county and community

Facility Features: softball/baseball diamond with bleacher seating, hiking trail, open field areas, pickle ball courts, basketball, volleyball, playground, nine (9) hole disc golf course, pavilion with picnicking and grill, unpaved parking, courtesy refuse container, courtesy dog waste station, hand water pump, portable toilet

Accessibility Status: Toilet, Court, and Playground Equipment improvements to be made

Physical Condition: Good

Other Agencies in the Vicinity of Prairieville Township
with Recreational Opportunities

North Country Trail

The North Country Trail (NCT) is a public-private partnership hiking trail that stretches 4,500 miles from North Dakota to the New York-Vermont border. The NCT enters Barry County north of Irving, travels south using portions of the Paul Henry-Thornapple Trail, then dissects the Yankee Springs Recreation Area and Barry state Game Area. Once south of the recreation area, it becomes a road walk from Keller Road, passing through Prairieville and passing by Municipal and Parker Road Parks, over to the Kellogg Biological Station. The NCT passes through Municipal Park in Prairieville and Parker Road Park.

Battle Creek Outdoor Education Center, 10160 S. M-37 Hwy, Delton, Michigan

This 176 acre facility is owned by the Battle Creek Public Schools. Recreational opportunities include swimming, boating and canoeing on Clear Lake, two miles of woods and prairie hiking trails and a high ropes course. It is available for conferences on weekends during the summer.

Circler Pines Center, Mullen Road, Delton, Michigan

This is a member owned and operated non-profit cooperative organization situated on 294 acres of land with trails for hiking and cross country skiing and frontage on Stewart Lake.

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, 701 W. Cloverdale Rd. Hastings, Michigan

Set on 661 acres, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, and environmental education center, provides visitors with a unique exposure to a rare blend of diverse habitats including wetlands, forests, marshes, streams, lakes, and prairies. Visitors may explore over seven miles of nature trails and participate in programs and classes.

Kellogg Biological Station, 3700 E. Gull Lake Drive. Hickory Corners, Michigan

The 4000 acres include the Kellogg Farm and Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. The farm and sanctuary are open to the public for self-guided and group tours year round.

Campgrounds

There are two state campgrounds found locally at Yankee Springs, one on Gun Lake and one at Deep Lake, and twenty-three (23) licensed private campgrounds in Barry County.

Golf Courses

There are six golf courses within Barry County

Canoe Liveries

Three (3) canoe liveries operate on the Thornapple River in Barry County.

Description of Planning and Public Input Process

Planning process began in January of 2021. It started with a review of our past activity including plan over the last five (5) years. We then targeted to set a new plan that will include public input and be feasible to attain over the five (5) years. The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the Department of Natural Resources-Grants Management checklist that works in conjunction with our goals and set a strategy to do the following:

Assess the success of previous Five (5) Year Plan goal attainment. The Goal Attainment summary is in the appendices (A).

The Parks and Recreation Commission conduct an accessibility assessment for each site using ADA Standards for Accessibility Design, Boating, Fishing, and Playground compliance. Findings are found in the appendices (C). Non-compliant areas will be addressed with planned actions in plan.

Survey is written and responses from the public come from park guests buying passes and completing a voluntary written survey; and also from electronic responses on a site published in the Hastings Banner and on our Facebook Page and township site. The data is tallied from the written responses and included with the electronic responses.

Survey data is collected and compiled to summarize public satisfaction and areas that the public feels we need to improve, add, or change. Findings from survey will be used to drive the plans for the next five (5) years.

All reasonable suggestions for us to address will be included in next five (5) years plan. Draft an action plan from reasonable and financially feasible ideas provided with estimated cost and timing.

Publish the action plan for 30 days for a the public to review and inform the public through Hastings Banner and on Facebook Page and township site.

Over the next 5 (five) years revisit the actions with monthly meetings to assess success in completion of targets.

Public Input

Related to the foregoing planning, public notification will be provided by publishing the planning initiative in “ The Hastings Banner” and on the Facebook and township sites. Information related to surveys will include the method for the public to provide input related to Parks and Recreation Commission 5 (five) year plan initiatives. Information will also include survey link and an invitation to the Parks and Recreation Meeting,

Per the instructions in the notification the surveys will then be available to participate in and the open input meeting will be conducted at the time and location indicated.

Public notification will also be given to announce where and when the public will be able to review a copy of the Five (5) Year Draft Plan for any comments.

Goals and Objectives

The broad goals and objectives that the commission targets are listed below:

- Prioritize all resources available to renovate, replace, or repair existing facilities to meet safety standards;*
- Maintain all facilities so that recreational opportunities are available and accessible to all residents including its disabled users;*
- Have ongoing assessment of how well Prairieville Township residents continue to enjoy and utilize all facilities.*

Our Commission will continue to work to these goals and objectives over the next five (5) years. We will plan expenditures and staffing with consideration of the maintenance required to keep parks attractive. We will take action to best keep the parks safe, provide the recreation desired by our visitors and maintain the most accessible accommodations possible. Especially important will be to continue to conduct ongoing assessment of public suggestions or concerns. We will do this through our monthly meetings, responses to public communication and input, and review of any information provided to us on our website or Facebook page.

Action Program

The Action Program that was developed by Prairieville Township Parks and Recreation Commission includes specific actions we will take to accomplish the goals and objectives stated above. The actions are compiled from the interpretations from the public input survey and needs identified in the accessibility assessment. It also contains observed needs from the Commissioners that must be addressed over the next five years.

The actions are detailed with estimated target dates, estimated costs, and any special considerations toward completing the action. It is considered a living program and the Action Plan is a living document that will be measured and updated in conjunction with the Parks & Recreation Commission meetings.

The Action Plan document is found in the appendices that will be reviewed and updated in our monthly meetings.

Post Completion Self-Inspection Report

The Prairieville Township Parks & Recreation Commission self-evaluates our action in this way. Did we identify up front what we were going to do effectively? And did we do it? Did we set targets for this plan that are specific and measurable?

In response to these questions we find that up front the Commission was effective by recognizing that number one, we need to address the satisfaction of the public in its use of the parks. We wrote a survey that allowed us to gather relevant information and allow a means to gather specific suggestions. We acquired information that was needed to draw conclusions on what specific actions would address the public needs.

The Commission has set targets to address these needs to be measured over the next five (5) years. It will also be attentive to any new ideas or suggestions that arise over the life of this plan and revise the action plans accordingly.