

2019

State of the County Report



2019 County Parks Board
 Larry Catanzarite, President
 Donna Pfeil, Vice President
 Virginia Calvin, Secretary
 John Ferrettie // John Gleissner
 Rick Kennedy* // Thomas Panzica
 * partial term

2019 County Commissioners
 Andrew Kostielney, President
 Deb Fleming, Vice President
 Dave Thomas, Member

2019 County Council
 Rafael Morton, President
 Joseph F. Canarecci // Mark A. Catanzarite
 Diana Hess // Robert Kruszynski, Jr.
 Corey D. Noland // Richard Pfeil
 Mark Root // Mark Telloyan

2019 Parks Foundation Officers
 John Yarger, President
 Kyle Copelin, Vice President
 Pete Owsianowski, Secretary
 Andrew Szczechowski, Treasurer

The St. Joseph County Parks
 Bendix Woods County Park
 Ferrettie-Baugo Creek County Park
 St. Patrick's County Park
 Spicer Lake Nature Preserve
Partnered sites:
 Chamberlain Lake Nature Preserve
 Jasinski Canoe Launch
 Beverly D. Crone Restoration Area



Our Mission

The St. Joseph County Parks Department enriches the community and the lives of St. Joseph County residents. We...

- ▲ Conserve and care for significant natural areas.
- ▲ Promote stewardship of our natural and cultural heritage through quality programs and services.
- ▲ Enhance visitor experiences through well-maintained park facilities.



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What We Do...

The County Parks provide benefits to community public health and economic development by managing over 1,300 acres of public access greenspace, river and stream corridors, wetlands and woods, and providing space for gatherings, walking, biking, canoeing, paddling, skiing, and learning.

2019 visitation at the County Parks and off-site events exceeded **310,000** users.

We Are Proud of these 2019 Highlights!

- ▲ The Indiana Department of Natural Resources approved the St. Joseph County Parks Five-Year Master Plan for 2019-2023, culminating an 18-month public engagement and stakeholder effort. (1)
- ▲ Funded by a St. Joseph County TEAM grant, the Red Barn and Pole Barn at St. Patrick's County Park received a new coat of paint. Both structures are on the National Register of Historic Places. (2)
- ▲ Partners from Niles, Niles Township, MACOG, SJC Infrastructure Planning and Growth, and trail enthusiasts celebrated the recently completed Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail connection at the state line at the north end of the LaSalle Trail segment managed by the County Parks. A commemorative medallion was embedded at the junction. (3)
- ▲ Four of the St. Joseph County Parks were selected for the newly launched Indiana Birding Trail, a statewide initiative to promote outstanding natural areas for birdwatching. (4)
- ▲ Leslie Witkowski, Interpretive Services Manager, received the Great Lakes Region Master Interpretive Manager Award from the National Association for Interpretation. Jacob Ketting, Facilities Manager, earned his Playground Inspection Certification. (5)
- ▲ The Interpretive Naturalist staff co-hosted the Great Lakes Regional Workshop for the National Association for Interpretation in South Bend. Over 180 professionals attended instructional sessions and field training including several held at the County Parks. (6)
- ▲ Visit Indiana recognized Big Tree Trail at Bendix Woods County Park as one of the top hiking trails in Indiana. (7)
- ▲ Nearly 500 people participated in Running Wild, a 5K trail run/3K walk at St. Patrick's County Park. (8)

- ▲ The River Ramble, a 1.5-acre natural playscape slated for St. Patrick's County Park, broke ground in fall. The St. Joseph County Parks Foundation completed fundraising for the project with support from Visit South Bend Mishawaka, Community Foundation of St. Joseph County, Indiana Housing and Development Authority, and other local foundations, businesses, and donors. The River Ramble is slated to open in 2020. ▲ New play features were installed at Ferrettie-Baugo Creek and St. Patrick's County Parks.
- ▲ Through the County's Energy Performance contract, the well house at St. Patrick's County Park was replaced using a design inspired by historical photos of the original structure. ▲ Zero-turn mowers, a leaf blower, and new canoe-rental vans replaced aging vehicles and equipment. ▲ New disc golf tee pads and movable baskets were installed to enhance the disc golf course at Ferrettie-Baugo Creek County Park.

Here's Some Happy Numbers...

22,000: people participating in leisure services activities. **18,000:** people participating in park naturalist programs. **3:** eaglets fledged by the bald eagles at St. Patrick's County Park. **20:** schools receiving funding through the Donna Pfeil Scholarship Fund and the Parks Foundation to participate in park programs. **132:** record number of gallons of maple syrup produced by volunteers at Bendix Woods County Park. **3,900:** hours of support provided by volunteers to the County Parks. **43:** organizations partnered with us for events and programs.