



# **2025 -2029 Allegan County Parks Recreation Plan**



**Board of Commissioners**

Brandy Gildea, Parks Manager

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# **2025 -2029 Allegan County Parks Recreation Plan**

This presentation's purpose is to provide the Board of Commissioners with an overview of the Parks Recreation Plan and to prepare the Board for a future discussion of the necessary funding to implement this plan. I will cover the following information:

- **The Planning Process**
- **Community Desired Priorities**
- **The Parks Goals and Objectives**
- **Desired Future State**
- **Current State**
- **Next Steps**

# 2025 -2029 Allegan County Parks Recreation Plan

- Provides an assessment and inventory of current Allegan County parks and recreational facilities.
- Sets a unified vision for parks and recreation
- It's our playbook for community building regarding parks and recreation!
- A collaborative effort by
  - Community
  - Parks Advisory Board
  - Parks Staff
  - Board of Commissioner
- Creates eligibility to apply for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.



# 2025 -2029 Allegan County Parks Recreation Plan

- Section 1: Community Description (pg. 7)
- Section 2 - Administrative Structure (pg. 14)
- Section 3 - Recreation Inventory (pg. 18)
- Section 4 - Resource Inventory (pg. 63)

Link to Plan

[2025-2029 Allegan County  
Recreation Plan](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS		
06 Introduction	07 Section 1: Community Description	14 Section 2: Administrative Structure
18 Section 3: Recreation Inventory	63 Section 4: Resource Inventory Map	64 Section 5: Planning Process
68 Section 6: Goals & Objectives	71 Goal 1	72 Goal 2
73 Goal 3	74 Section 7: Action program	75 2025 -2029 Priority Items/Action

# Planning Process & Public Input

(Section 6: page 73)

- ✓ October 2023 – Review and Update Goals and Objectives
- ✓ October 2023 – February 2024 - Public Recreation Plan/Park User Survey
- ✓ February 2024 – Review data from:
  - 2022 National Community Survey
  - Board of Commissioners Survey
  - Recreation Plan/Park User Survey
  - County Demographic Analysis
- ✓ April 2024 – Public Input Session
- ✓ June 2024 – September 2024 – Draft available for review
- ✓ October 2024 – Public Hearing /Parks Advisory Board Approval





# Feedback – Community Desired Priorities from Data Collected

Data identified the following areas for improvement for parks and recreation:

- ❖ Park/Recreation Programs
- ❖ Walking and Bike Trails (year-round)
- ❖ Variety of Year Round Recreation Opportunities
- ❖ Safety/Security/Customer Service at Campgrounds/Parks (Increase Staff Presence)
- ❖ Improved Technology (Wi-Fi/Pay Machines/Electric)
- ❖ Improved Water Access (Lake & Rivers)
  - ❖ Including
    - ❖ ADA access at West Side County Park
    - ❖ Improved Access at Gun Lake County Park
- ❖ Modernization of Campgrounds & Campsite Sites
- ❖ Access & Accessibility in Allegan State Game Area
- ❖ Improved Road and Parking at Parks and Campgrounds
- ❖ ORV Trails



# Goals /Objectives –

## Goal 1 Recreation Development (Section 6: page 71)

- Provide safe, broad community-based recreation opportunities, facilities, and programs that improve the overall quality of life year-round for all Allegan County residents and tourists.
- Support and/or provide pathways/ waterways for recreational and transportation use within our park system and focus upon linking, schools, parks, neighborhoods, cities, business areas, local destination points, and regional trail systems.
- Develop recreation opportunities that focus upon and take advantage of Allegan County water resources.
- Create Improvement & Development Plan



# Goals /Objectives –

## Goal 2 Operational and Fiscal Excellence

(Section 6: page 72)

- Continue Park Maintenance to increase efficiency and reduce costs to ensure our current parklands are in safe, functional, and aesthetic condition.
- Being good stewards of budget and align to priorities.





# Goals /Objectives –

## Goal 3 Promotion, Health, Education, & Preservation

(Section 6: page 73)

- Provide transparent, accurate, and timely information to Allegan County and park users through integrated marketing activities.
- Provide leisure time activities with special consideration given to improving health, wellness, and fitness.
- Promote the preservation, protection, restoration, and education of Allegan County's natural and cultural resources.



# Desired Future State: Action Plan –All Parks

(Section 7: page 75)

## ▶ High-Quality Maintenance and Operations

- Operations budget
- Capital Budget
- Park Services
- Promoting the health of individuals, families and youth
- Clean, safe, and operational

## ▶ Increase staffing hours - *Park Rangers*

- Assisting visitors by providing information, maps, and guidance on recreational activities such as hiking, camping, and wildlife viewing.
- Ensure visitor safety by monitoring conditions, responding to emergencies, and providing first aid when needed.

## ▶ Use of Volunteers

- Serve an important, integral role in helping achieve the park's goal of enhancing the quality of life for County residents and visitors.
- Volunteers will contribute time, talent, skills, and leadership to enhance the service levels offered through the County Parks system.

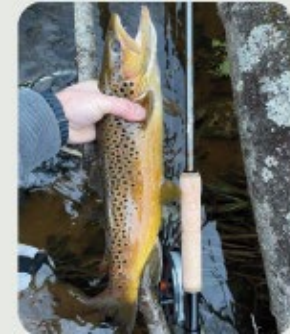


# Desired Future State: Action Plan –All Parks

(Section 7: page 75)

## ► Programming

- As a natural resource-based park system, it is important that Allegan County Parks educate park users and the general public on the natural features found in the parks - both to enhance the enjoyment of the park and to foster respect for and protection of the natural features.



## ► Collaboration

- Continue maintaining good relationships with a wide variety of public, non-profit, and private individuals and groups
- Maintaining and expanding these relationships should continue to be pursued where mutual benefits and efficiencies can be obtained.



# Desired Future State: Action Plan –All Parks

(Section 7: page 75)

## ▶ Long-term Forest Management Plan

- Long-term forest management plans prioritize the health and resilience of forest ecosystems.
- Long-term forest management plans offer numerous benefits, both for the environment and for human societies to ensure the well-being of both present and future generations.



## ▶ Update Signage/Branding

- By updating signage regularly, you ensure that the information remains accurate, relevant, and effective in conveying messages to the intended audience.
- Signage often plays a critical role in branding and marketing efforts.
- Updating signage helps maintain brand consistency, reinforces brand recognition and loyalty among customers and stakeholders





# Desired Future State: Action Plan –Individual Parks

(Section 7: page 76)

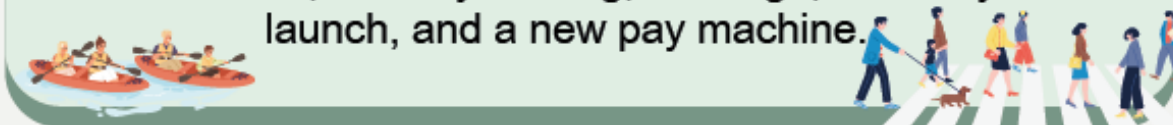
## ▶ West Side Park Beach Access (approximate cost \$2,000,000)

Move forward with a developed plan to restore ADA beach access and/or viewing points to Lake Michigan.



## ▶ Gun Lake Park Improvements (approximate cost \$550,500)

Improvements to include included an improved crosswalk, improved launch area (underwater), improved drive/launch area (above water) lighting added near the boat launch, security fencing, drainage, ADA kayak launch, and a new pay machine.



# Desired Future State: Action Plan –Individual Parks

(Section 7: page 76)

- ▶ **Silver Creek Campground Improvements -Phase 1 (approximate cost \$600,000)**

Improvements to included modernize some campsites, adding modern bathrooms with shower house, and adding walking trails. (separate from Equestrian trails)



- ▶ **Modern (water & electric) Campground at Littlejohn (approximate cost \$1,500,000)**

Turn former concession building into shower house.



Placing a campground in the area where the current baseball fields are.



# Desired Future State: Action Plan –Individual Parks

(Section 7: page 77)

## ▶ New Richmond Park Improvements (approximate cost \$500,000)



Develop and install kayak launch.



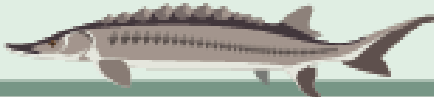
Add a pay machine and gate at current parking lot.

Additional parking and no pay parking lot.



Create an area for presentation and fish release near river for education & sturgeon release opportunities.

Add improved location closer to river for sturgeon trailer.

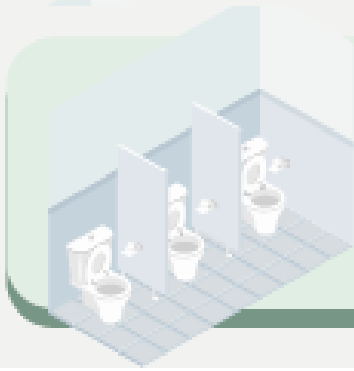


# Desired Future State: Action Plan –Individual Parks

(Section 7: page 77)

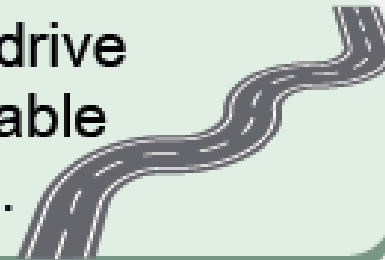


## Modernize Bysterveld Park (approximate cost \$600,000)



Modern restroom  
(running water &  
electric).

Pave the entrance drive  
& parking lot to enable  
year-round use.



Add electricity to  
the pavilion.





# Future Investment in Allegan County Parks

## Current State:

- **Local Revenue Sharing Payments (Casino) funds have financially funded the County's park operations and capital budgets for the past ten years.**
- **The current Local Revenue Sharing funds will not maintain the annual increase in operations, primarily from increases in personnel costs.**
- **Without an additional funding source Parks is unable to:**
  - i. Expand operations (increase staffing, add park programming, fund the increasing operations)**
  - ii. Replace Existing Assets (replacement of mowers, roofs, pavilions, restroom amenities, etc.)**
  - iii. Fund Capital Projects as identified by the community in the Recreation Plan (see Section 7: Action Program)**



# 2025 -2029 Allegan County Parks Recreation Plan



## Next Steps:

- The Board of Commissioners will need to approve a new recreation plan before applying for any Michigan Natural Resource grants
- The existing plan is good through the end of 2024.
- Recreation Plan can be found: [2025-2029 Allegan County Recreation Plan](#)
- The Parks Advisory Board recommends the projects within the recreation plan.
- The Parks Manager will work with the Parks Advisory Board to develop a recommendation on funding methods for operations and projects as outlined in the recreation plan.
- The Board of Commissioners should not implement the plan before a funding recommendation is finalized and made by the Parks Advisory Board.

# 2025 -2029 Allegan County Parks Recreation Plan

## Questions?

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