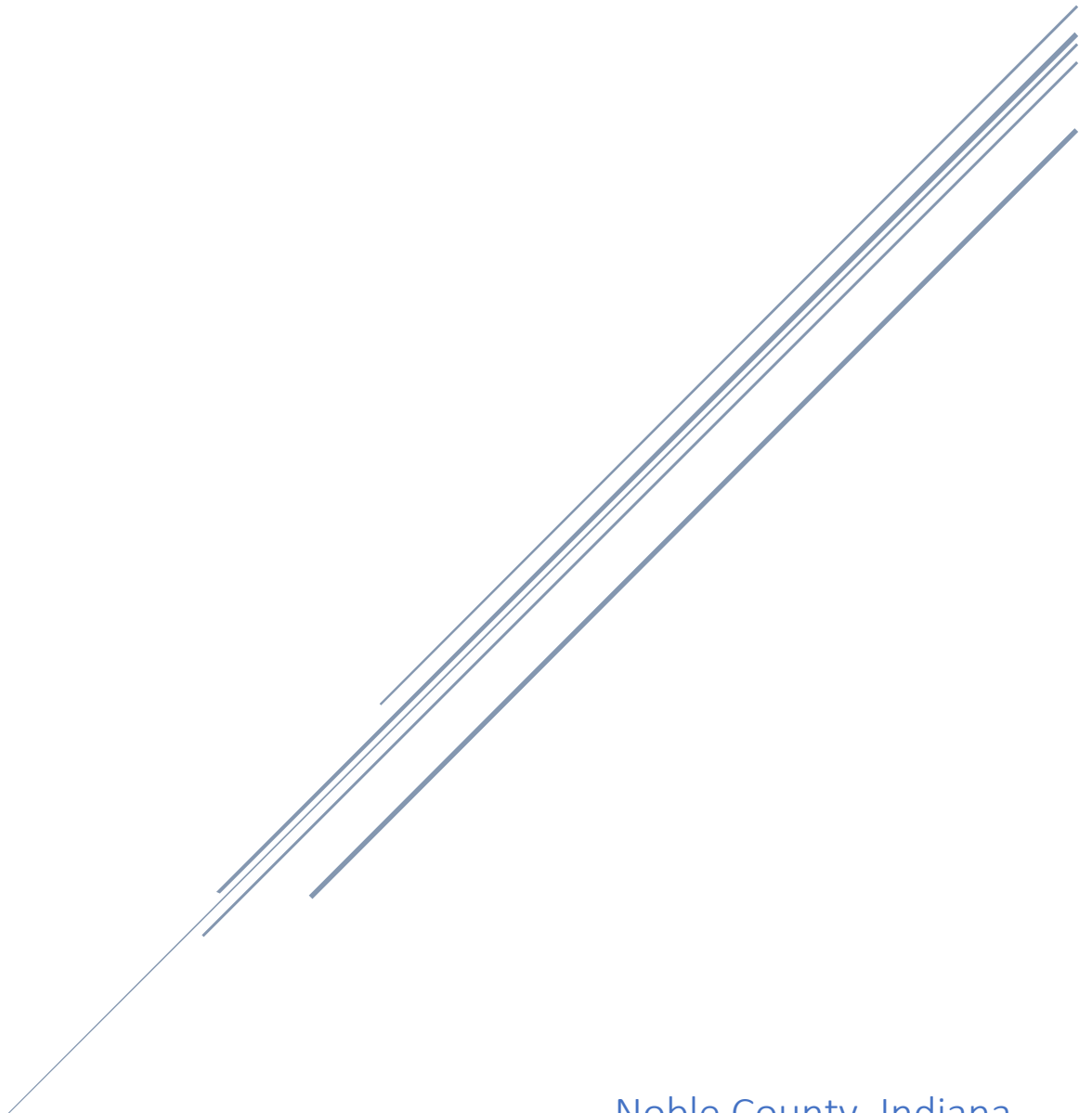


NOBLE COUNTY PARKS PLAN

2019-2024 Five Year Plan



Noble County, Indiana



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Cameron F. Clark, Director

Division of Outdoor Recreation
402 W. Washington Street W271
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2782
317-232-4071 Fax: 317-233-4648
www.IN.gov/dnr/outdoor

Ray Scott
Noble County Park and Recreation Board
101 N. Orange St.
Albion, IN 46701

April 1st, 2019

Dear Mr. Scott,

The DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation planning staff has reviewed the final draft of the 2019-2024 Noble County Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The plan meets the Department of Natural Resources' minimum requirements for local parks and recreation master plans. This letter certifies that your community **is eligible to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants through this office in the 2019 grant year.** A new plan will be due on January 15th, 2025, at which time your current LWCF grant application eligibility will expire.

If you haven't already, we strongly recommend that you contact Mr. Bob Bronson, our grant section chief, as soon as possible about future grant applications. Bob and his staff can assist in your grant application process. He can be reached by phone at: (317) 232-4075 or by e-mail at: bbronson@dnr.IN.gov.

We support your planning efforts and encourage your participation in the grant programs administered by the Division of Outdoor Recreation. If you require further information regarding planning, do not hesitate to call me at: (317) 232-4071 or by e-mail at: gbeilfuss@dnr.IN.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Beilfuss". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Greg Beilfuss
State and Community Outdoor Recreation Planner
IDNR Division of Outdoor Recreation

ECC – Kenneth Hughes; Noble County Planning Commission

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Noble County Parks Plan

2019-2024 Five Year Plan

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Executive Summary

Goals of the Plan

The Noble County 2019-2024 Parks Plan has been created in order to provide direction for the Parks Board in accomplishing their goal of providing and aiding in the provision of recreational facilities that meet the needs of the residents of Noble County. To that end, our parks and recreational facilities will make Noble County a better place to live.

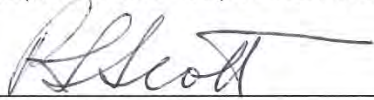
Adoption Resolution

Whereas, the Noble County Parks and Recreation Board is aware of the parks and recreation needs of the residents of Noble County; and

Whereas, the Board realizes the importance of sound planning in order to meet the needs of its citizens;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Noble County Parks and Recreation Board, by a unanimous declaration, does adopt the 2019-2024 Noble County Parks and Recreation Master Plan as its official plan for the next five years, for the development of parks and recreational opportunities in Noble County, Indiana.

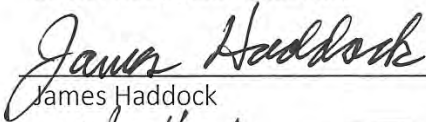
Adopted this 27th day of March 2019.



Ray Scott, President



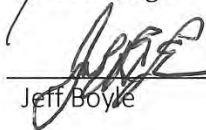
Scott Allen, Vice-President



James Haddock



John Metzger



Jeff Boyle



Doug Keenan, Secretary

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Chapter 1—Noble County Profile

Background

Chapter 1—Noble County Profile

Chapter 1 includes background, history and goals of the Noble County Parks and Recreation Board and an overview of demographic characteristics, park inventory, cultural and manmade features and natural resources.

Chapter 2—Demand Analysis

Chapter 2 includes a compilation of stakeholder input, information methodology and the results of public participation. This portion is instrumental in determining the recreational needs of the community and establishing a cohesive vision and direction for the Noble County Parks and Recreation Board.

Chapter 3—Action Plan

Chapter 3 will review current needs, determine a final analysis to better assist with recommendations, and an action plan for the guidance of the Noble County Parks and Recreation Board.

The combined report will provide the framework to be submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) as a baseline report for the “Noble County Five-Year Master Plan”.

Chapter 4—Supporting Information

Chapter 4 includes miscellaneous information about the Noble County Parks Board along with documentation of public outreach.

The Planning Area

Located in Northeast Indiana, Noble County covers 412 square miles of land, and is northwest of Fort Wayne.

The Parks Board of Noble County is responsible for all of the unincorporated areas of Noble County outside of the incorporated communities of Albion, Avilla, Cromwell, Kendallville, Ligonier, Rome City, and Wolcottville.

The Park Board

The Park Board was created in 2010 by Ordinance of the Noble County Council in response to a part of the 2007 Noble County Comprehensive Plan. The board consists of six people, two appointed by the Judge of the Circuit Court, two by the County Council, one by the Board of Commissioners, and one by the Purdue County Extension Agent.

Current Members

- Ray Scott, President
- Scott Allen, PE, Vice-President
- Doug Keenan, Secretary
- John Metzger
- James Haddock
- Jeff Boyle

Plan Author

Kenneth J. Hughes, AICP—Noble County Plan Director

Social and Economic Factors

For detailed demographics & information about Noble County, please see the Noble County Data Snapshot by the Purdue Center for Regional Development at: <https://www.noblecountyplanning.com/plans>

Population Trends

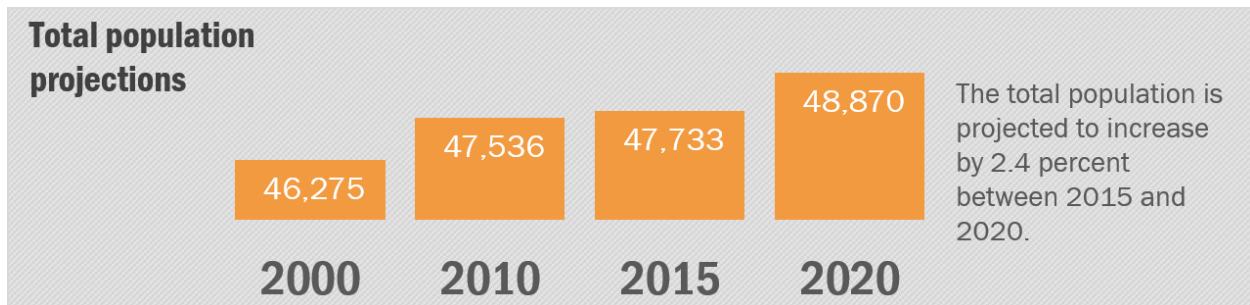


Figure 1 Population Projections from Purdue Data Snapshot

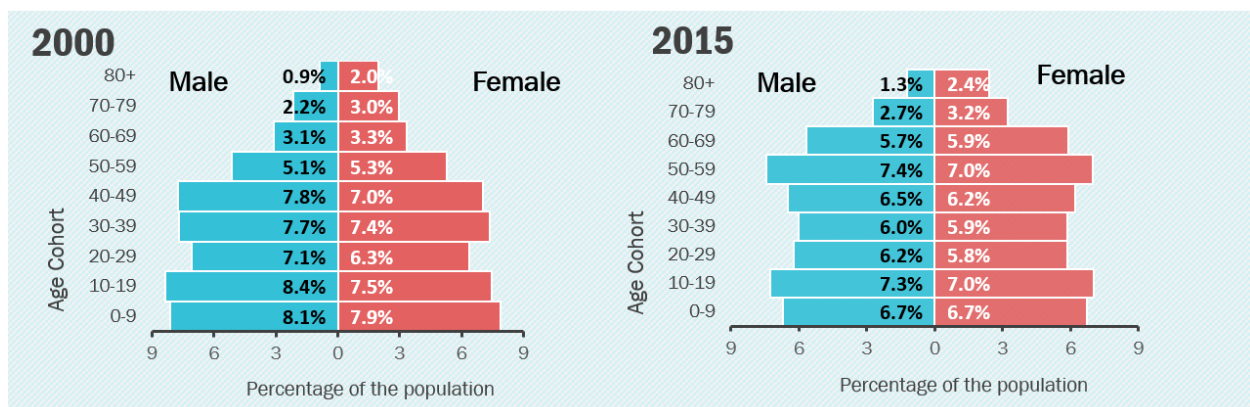


Figure 2 Population Pyramid from Purdue Data Snapshot

Noble County experiences a challenge unlike most other communities in rural Indiana where the concentration of people is so spread out. Over 56% of the population of Noble County lives outside any municipal limits and receives services from Noble County. (43.95% or about 20,900 people live within corporate limits of a town or city.) This demographic composition increases the importance of evaluating future parks and recreational areas in unincorporated areas of Noble County.

Socio-Economic Factors

The economic base of Noble County is manufacturing with all five of the largest employers being manufacturers.

NAICS Code	Description	Jobs 2003	Jobs 2016	Change (2003-2016)	% Change (2003-2016)	Average Total Earnings 2016
11	Crop and Animal Production	1,172	1,290	118	10%	\$33,579
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	12	17	5	42%	\$74,915
22	Utilities	63	53	-10	-16%	\$103,620
23	Construction	903	878	-25	-3%	\$38,788
31	Manufacturing	10,356	9,140	-1,216	-12%	\$55,442
42	Wholesale Trade	366	444	78	21%	\$56,584
44	Retail Trade	2,004	2,045	41	2%	\$25,924
48	Transportation and Warehousing	563	612	49	9%	\$42,565
51	Information	357	248	-109	-31%	\$42,083
52	Finance and Insurance	395	469	74	19%	\$37,230
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	505	742	237	47%	\$31,852
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	461	571	110	24%	\$35,957
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	180	38	-142	-79%	\$56,807
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	877	851	-26	-3%	\$29,173
61	Educational Services	181	256	75	41%	\$22,699
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,304	1,279	-25	-2%	\$38,178
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	183	174	-9	-5%	\$13,690
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,108	1,138	30	3%	\$13,495
81	Other Services -except Public Administration	1,173	1,092	-81	-7%	\$18,654
90	Government	2,106	2,054	-52	-2%	\$44,756
All	Total	24,269	23,391	-878	-4%	\$41,846

Figure 3 Employment by Industry from Purdue Data Snapshot

Establishment	
1.	Lsc Communications
2.	Kraft Foods
3.	Silgan Plastics Llc
4.	Busche Enterprise
5.	Group Dekko

Figure 4 Largest Employers in Noble County from Purdue Data Snapshot

Income & Household Income

	2001	2008	2015
Total Population in Poverty	7.7%	10.0%	9.8%
Minors (Under Age 18) in Poverty	10.5%	15.0%	14.2%
Real Median Household Income (2013)*	\$53,642	\$51,682	\$50,068
Real Per Capita Income (2013)*	\$29,650	\$29,598	\$33,718

Figure 5 Income Figures from Purdue Data Snapshot

Since 2001, Noble County median household income has fallen by more than \$3,000 while per capita income has increased by nearly \$3,000. This can indicate that more households are consisting of a single-earner instead of two-earner households.

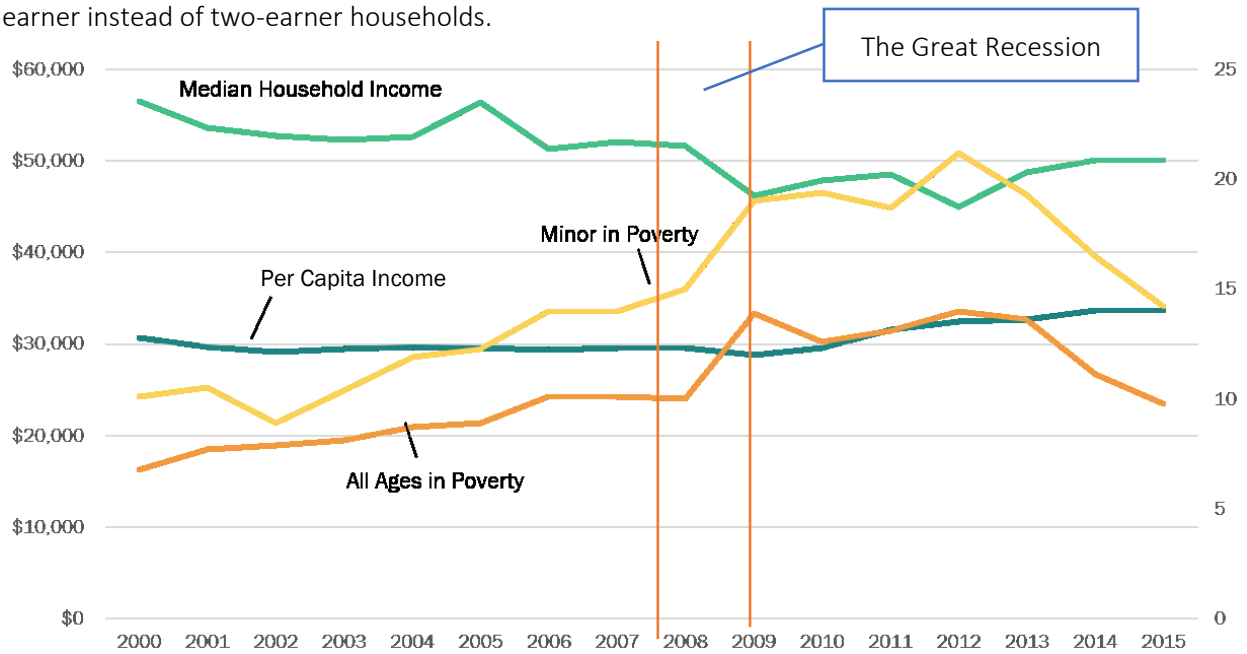


Figure 6 Income Graph from Purdue Data Snapshot

Population Estimates by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2017	Number	Pct Dist.	Pct Dist. in U.S.
American Ind. or Alaskan Native Alone	13	0.0 %	0.8 %
Asian Alone	311	0.7 %	5.4 %
Black Alone	183	0.4 %	12.7 %
Native Hawaiian and Other Pac. Isl. Alone	1	0.0 %	0.2 %
White Alone	46,033	97.1 %	73.0 %
Two or More Race Groups	685	1.4 %	3.1 %
Non-Hispanic or Latino	42,596	89.8 %	82.4 %
Hispanic or Latino	4,825	10.2 %	17.6 %

Source US Census Bureau

Of note is the minority majority population in the City of Ligonier where over half of the Hispanic or Latino community resides. This segment accounts for 59.9% of the city’s population.

Natural Features & Landscape

Lakes

Within Noble County lie 117 lakes. However, many of these lakes have no public access, and are surrounded by private owners, including lake homes and cabins. Major natural lakes in Noble County include:

Baughner Lake, Engle Lake, Muncie Lake, Bear Lake, Henderson Lake, Round Lake, Big Lake, High Lake, Skinner Lake, Bixler Lake, Jones Lake, Smalley Lake, Chain O’Lakes, Knapp Lake, Upper Long Lake, Crooked Lake, Little Long Lake, Waldron Lake, Deer Lake, Lower Long Lake, Williams Lake

Sylvan Lake is the only substantial manmade lake in the county, with the dam at Rome City creating the 669-acre lake, 16 miles of shoreline, and has a public access site.

See appendix for map of lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands

Rivers & Streams

The Elkhart River is the principal drainage outlet for Noble County. It was formed by the confluence of the North Branch Elkhart River and the South Branch Elkhart River at a point about 3.5 miles east of Ligonier, Indiana. The Elkhart River flows northwestward to its junction with the St. Joseph River in Elkhart, Indiana. About 10 miles of this river are in Noble County with about 36 miles downstream of the county line. At the county line the Elkhart River drainage area is 303 sq. miles. The other 9 streams within the St. Joseph River sub-basin flowing from Noble County include Little Elkhart Creek, Solomon Creek, and Turkey Creek. Seventy-five percent of the Noble County lies within this sub-basin. Flow characteristics of this area are perennial by nature, due principally to substantial areas of wetlands, natural lakes, and groundwater reservoirs.

Noble County lies along the eastern continental divide and thereby fall along the upper watershed of several major drainage basins. The natural stream system in the upper watersheds is largely comprised of

channels connecting the many natural lakes. These channels are inherently shallow streams meandering through marsh lands.

The Tippecanoe River drainage area (part of the Wabash River sub-basin of the Ohio River basin) is 36 sq. miles, makes up approximately 10% of Noble County, and is located in the southwest corner of the county. Like the St. Joseph River sub-basin area, flow is perennial and natural lakes are a dominant landscape feature. Wilmot Pond is the only major artificial lake.

In the southeast corner of the county, Sycamore Creek, Little Cedar Creek, Black Creek, and Willow Creek all drain to the Maumee River sub-basin of the Great Lakes basin. Fifteen percent of the county lies in this sub-basin. Little Cedar Creek has headwaters in adjacent DeKalb County and after only about two miles in Noble County returns to DeKalb County. This stream has about 35 sq. miles of drainage area. The other three streams mentioned above originate in Noble County.

Impaired Water Bodies

According to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management’s 303(d) list, last updated in 2016, the following are impaired water bodies in Noble County.

ASSESSMENT UNIT NAME	CAUSE OF IMPAIRMENT
BAUGHER LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
BIG LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
BILGER DITCH	E. COLI
BLACK CREEK	E. COLI
BLACK CREEK	E. COLI
BLACK CREEK - UNNAMED TRIBUTARY	E. COLI
BLUE RIVER	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
BLUE RIVER - UNNAMED TRIBUTARY	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
BOYD DITCH	E. COLI
CARROL CREEK	E. COLI
CARROL CREEK	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
CRANE LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
CROFT DITCH	E. COLI
DOCK LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
ELKHART RIVER	E. COLI
ELKHART RIVER	E. COLI
ELKHART RIVER, MIDDLE BRANCH	DISSOLVED OXYGEN
ELKHART RIVER, MIDDLE BRANCH	E. COLI
ELKHART RIVER, MIDDLE BRANCH	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
ELKHART RIVER, NORTH BRANCH	E. COLI
ELKHART RIVER, NORTH BRANCH - UNNAMED TRIBUTARY	E. COLI
ELKHART RIVER, SOUTH BRANCH	E. COLI
ELKHART RIVER, SOUTH BRANCH	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
ELKHART RIVER, SOUTH BRANCH	E. COLI
GORDY LAKE	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
GRETZINGER DITCH	E. COLI
GRETZINGER DITCH	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
HENDERSON LAKE	PCBS (FISH TISSUE)
HINDMAN LAKE	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
HOSLER DITCH	DISSOLVED OXYGEN
HOSLER DITCH	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
IDEN BRANCH	E. COLI
KNAPP LAKE	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
LONG LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
LOWER LONG LAKE	PHOSPHORUS

MILLER LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
MUD LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
PORT MITCHELL LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
RIMMEL BRANCH	E. COLI
RIMMEL BRANCH	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
RIVIR LAKE	PCBS (FISH TISSUE)
RIVIR LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
RIVIR LAKE	TOTAL MERCURY (FISH TISSUE)
SAND LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
SOLOMON CREEK	E. COLI
SOLOMON CREEK	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
SYLVAN LAKE	PCBS (FISH TISSUE)
TIPPECANOE RIVER	DISSOLVED OXYGEN
TIPPECANOE RIVER	E. COLI
TIPPECANOE RIVER	NUTRIENTS
UPPER LONG LAKE	PHOSPHORUS
VILLAGE LAKE	IMPAIRED BIOTIC COMMUNITIES
WAHN DITCH	E. COLI

Figure 7 Impaired Waterways from IDEM (2016)

Topography

Noble County topography is more rolling, and consequently fluctuation in stream flow is more pronounced. Green Township is significantly hilly while Perry Township is relatively flat.

Vegetation

The natural vegetation types that are found within this region include broadleaf forests, oak savannas and a variety of prairie communities. In addition, another form of vegetation listed in the “Noble County USDA Soil Report” is trees/timber (woody vegetation). Almost half of the area is currently covered by corn or soybean agriculture and more than a quarter of the area is dedicated to pasture, hay and mixed crops.

Soils

The “USDA Soil Conservation Service Report” in cooperation of Purdue University indicates a wide range of soil types throughout Noble County. Close to 50 percent of the soils are Blount silt loam, Fox Sandy loam, Houghton muck, drained, Miami and Morley silt loam, Pewamo silty clay loam, Riddles sandy and Sebewa loam. Slopes can range anywhere from 0 to 25 percent depending on the area, but the average slope runs between 2 to 6, and 6 to 12 percent. The Noble County Parks and Recreation Department will want to consider soil types and building restrictions when determining future parks and recreational sites (“Noble County USDA Soil Report” pg. 11).

Flood Plains

Land use in the flood plains of unincorporated Noble County is of relatively low agricultural intensity with about one-fourth of floodplains in cropland. The wetlands occupy about one-third of the flood plain and are marshy or swamped areas. Grassland, forest land and other land account for the balance. Several residences and a few businesses are located in flood-prone areas throughout the county. Concentrations of houses in flood-prone areas occur near certain lakes. The Noble County Plan Commission and Zoning Administrator are responsible for the management of floodplain activity.

Implications

The wide diversity of Noble County's topography and natural lakes provides a unique opportunity to for incorporating the waters of Noble County into parks and recreation efforts. Both on the lakes and along the rivers and streams of our county, water-based recreation is and will continue to play an important role in the recreation enjoyed by residents and visitors. The many forests of Noble County also offer an opportunity for passive recreation while also conserving precious land in our community.

Man-Made, Historical, & Cultural Features

National Register Listings

1. Gene Stratton Porter, Rome City
2. Lucky Hospital Museum, Wolf Lake
3. Kendallville Downtown Historic District
 - Iddings Gilbert Leader Anderson Block
4. Albion Courthouse Square Historic District
5. Stanley School (at Chain O' Lakes State Park)
6. Jefferson Union Church and Sweet Cemetery
7. Stone's Trace, Ligonier
8. Wilmot Milling Company
9. Ligonier Historic District
 - Ahavas Shalom Temple

Park Inventory

The Noble County GIS Department maintains a web map of park facilities in Noble County: <http://ncgis.nobleco.us/Apps/NobleCoRecreation/Index.html>.

Parks Board

The Noble County Parks Board does not currently own or maintain any parks.

Other Agencies

The current parks in Noble County are managed by other governmental or non-profit groups.

The Noble County Board of Commissioners own the 4-H Park land (west of Albion) but the land is leased to the 4-H Corporation and all improvements are owned by the 4-H Corporation.

Department of Natural Resources

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) operate several facilities in Noble County including Chain O' Lakes State Park and the Gene Stratton Porter Historic Site. There are also many natural habitats owned by DNR including the Tri-County Fish & Wildlife Area and the Mallard Roost Wetland Conservation Area. DNR also maintains the public access site on the public lakes in the county.

Cities and Towns

City of Kendallville

- Kendallville 4-H Fairgrounds (18 Acres)
- Kendallville Youth Center
- Kendallville Outdoor recreational Complex (89 Acres)
- Bixler Lake Park
- Sunset Park

City of Ligonier

- Kenney Park & Recreation (4.0 Acres)
- Pettit Park (1.6 Acres)
- Prentiss Park (.5 Acres)
- Triangle Park (.08 Acres)
- Gazebo Park (1.04 Acres)
- Strawberry Valley Cultural Trail

Town of Albion

- Hidden Diamonds (91.2 Acres)
- Owen Park (1.1 Acres)
- Valley View Park

Town of Avilla

- Avilla Park
- Eley Park

Town of Cromwell

- Cromwell Park (8 Acres)
- Cromwell Community Center

Town of Rome City

- Gaff Park (2.9 Acres)
- Grant Park (2.3 Acres)
- Lakeside Park Sycamore Park (1 Acre)
- Sylvan Lake Conservancy

Town of Wolcottville

- Wolcottville Ball Park

Township Parks

- Elkhart Township – Wawaka Ball Park
- Noble Township – Wolf Lake Park
- Swan Township – LaOtto Park

Merry Lea Environmental Center—Goshen College

The Merry Lea Environmental Center of Goshen College in Noble Township covers over 1,100 acres in Noble Township near High and Bear Lakes and includes miles of nature trails.

ACRES Land Trust

The ACRES Land Trust owns over 800 acres in Noble County with a significant portion on the West Lakes Chain.

Noble Trails

The non-profit Noble Trails Inc has built the majority of the Fishing Line Trail, a trail connecting Rome City and the City of Kendallville. Most of the trail is on the former Right of Way of the abandoned railroad that used to connect the two communities. Noble Trails is beginning to expand the Fishing Line Trail south from Kendallville to Avilla.

Other Facilities

- 4-H Park of Albion
- Black Pine Animal Sanctuary of Albion
- Cole Center Family YMCA of Kendallville

Chapter 2—Demand Analysis

Random Citizen Input

As part of the planning process, a survey was created and shared throughout Noble County by the Noble County Government Facebook and by the Noble County Parks Board. Results of the survey are included in the appendix.

The survey was distributed solely online and received 43 responses between it opening in mid-October and it closing on December 5.

The most prevalent information from the community survey included a desire to increase the miles of walking trails available and provide opportunities for canoe/kayak experiences through passive recreation.

Opportunities that the community did not believe the parks board should support included field and court sports, ice skating, a splash pad, or a campground.

Community Meeting

On December 5, 2018 the Parks Board held a park planning meeting with the public. Attendance is documented in the appendix. The attendants discussed two primary needs: 1) to publicize the opportunities for recreation, and 2) increase the miles of trails which will connect communities.

The attendance largely consisted of parks board members but the parks board also brought in discussion from individuals that came at the end of the meeting for the Board of Zoning Appeals which was held right after the Parks Meeting. The public made comments concerning:

- Increasing the availability of trails
- Publicizing the availability of recreational opportunities
- Ensuring safety of the trail users

Stakeholder Input

In order to better understand the needs for Noble County, the plan author scheduled meetings with a wide variety of stakeholders to discuss the parks plan and needs. These groups included:

- Parks Superintendents of Noble County's Cities and Towns
- Noble Trails, Inc. Board
- ACRES Inc.
- Environmental Educator for Merry Lea Environmental Center of Goshen College

Results of the stakeholder meetings are included in the appendix.

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Chapter 3—Action Plan

Recommendation

The Noble County Parks Board recommends that is continued to advocate for recreation opportunities throughout the county and to promote the existing excellent facilities. The Parks Board will continue to work with other government and citizen groups to fulfill the unmet needs of the residents of Noble County.

Board Action Plan

Following discussions, review of public participation, and review of research data, the following work plan was created.

Action	Timeline	Description	Community Partners
1	2019-2024	Increase the miles of trails available to residents	Noble Trails Municipal Parks Departments IDNR
2	2019-2020	Develop water based recreational opportunities on the Elkhart River	IDNR West Lakes Association Noble County Lakes Council
3	Ongoing	Publicize recreation assets	Convent and Visitors Bureau GIS Department
4	2020	Work with health leaders to address health issues like obesity and diabetes	Health Department Parkview Noble Hospital
5	2020-2021	Work with child development leaders to focus on programs for child enrichment	Dekko Foundation Community Foundation of Noble County
6	2024	Develop master plan for next 5 years	Plan Commission

Action 1—Increase the Miles of Trails

There is a clear need for trails in Noble County based on resident input and its ability to improve quality of life and place. The following action steps are part of the strategy to increase the availability of trails in Noble County.

The trail priority map can be viewed here: <https://www.noblecountyplanning.com/plans/>.

1a—Develop south branch of the Fishing Line Trail between Allen County and Kendallville

This component of the action comes from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources State Trails Plan.

Cost	\$400,000 per mile of trail between Allen County, through LaOtto, to Avilla \$100,000 per mile of trail between Avilla and Kendallville using I&M Land/Easements <i>Approximately 11 miles of trail</i>
Involved Parties	Noble Trails Board of Commissioners Highway Department IDNR-OR (Next Level Trails)
Timeline	2019-2024

1b—Develop a Trail Head for the Fishing Line Trail

As part of a complete trail system, trail heads will be needed to accommodate people’s use of the trail system. The trail heads should have parking, restrooms, and a place to fill water bottles. It could also be useful to include a quick bike repair station.

Cost	\$300,000 per trail head
Involved Parties	Noble Trails
Timeline	Planning & Design—2019 Fundraising—2019/2020 Construction—2020

1c—Install Emergency Trail Markers Along Trails

In order to provide safety for trail users, emergency trail markers are necessary.

Cost	\$200.00 per mile of trail
Involved Parties	Noble Trails Board of Commissioners County Plan Commission
Timeline	2019

1d—Accept Maintenance for Existing Trails

By accepting maintenance for existing trails developed by other groups like Noble Trails, those groups will be able to continue to focus on their mission of adding miles of trails.

Cost	\$30,000.00 per year
Involved Parties	Noble Trails Board of Commissioners Highway Department
Timeline	2019

1e—Partner with Noble Trails and Municipalities to Build Trails

Priority Trailways:

- Chain O’ Lakes Gateway Trail (between Albion and Chain O’ Lakes State Park)
- Diamond Trail (between Diamond Lake and Albion)
- Engle Lake Trail (between Ligonier and West Noble Schools along Engle Lake)
- Other trails as identified in Parks Plan Map

Cost	\$400,000 per mile of trail (where land is acquired)
Involved Parties	Noble Trails Board of Commissioners Highway Department IDNR Municipalities
Timeline	2019-2024

Action 2—Develop Water Based Recreational Opportunities on the Elkhart River

The beautiful Elkhart River can be used as a recreational asset for our residents and visitors to our communities. The stretch between Dukes Bridge and Cosperville can be developed for kayak and canoe use. This would include:

- Obtaining easement rights to use the river beyond normal riparian rights
- Obtain land in Cosperville for a trailhead and installing a kayak/canoe launch
- Developing trailheads at Dukes Bridge and Cosperville
- Cleaning the Elkhart River of obstructions & weeds
- Installing signage for the trail

Cost	\$250,000
Involved Parties	Noble County Lakes Council West Lakes Association IDNR-Fish and Wildlife Northeast Indiana Water Trails
Timeline	2019-2024

Action 3—Publicize Recreation Assets

With the great recreational assets that we have at our disposal already, the Parks Board will continue to publicize and share information about those assets.

Many people in our communities just do not know about the opportunities that there are and research shows that people want this quality of life but when you ask people about what our communities have to offer, they are unaware of the assets.

Cost	Undetermined
Involved Parties	Convention and Visitors Bureau GIS Department
Timeline	Ongoing

Action 4—Address Health Issues Through Parks

Access to recreational opportunities like parks and trails has a direct correlation to public health. The Parks Board will work with Parkview Noble to identify needs and gaps in Noble County’s services. The two will then work together to address those gaps and help make being healthy in Noble County more possible.

Cost	Undetermined
Involved Parties	Parkview Noble Hospital Noble County Health Department
Timeline	2020

Action 5—Develop Programs for Child Enrichment

As part of the Dekko Foundation’s pursuit of Economic Freedom, they place a high importance on childhood development. By partnering with the Dekko Foundation, the Parks Board will be able to provide new ways to allow children to develop. Some ideas include:

- Interactive learning stations along trails.
- Host events with schools on local trails to explore nature.

Cost	Undetermined
Involved Parties	Dekko Foundation Community Foundation of Noble County
Timeline	2020-2021

Action 6—Develop Parks Master Plan

Cost	\$500
Involved Parties	Plan Commission
Timeline	2024

Note that no transition plan for ADA accessibility is required because the Noble County Parks Board has no parks. The Noble County Board of Commissioners have adopted a transition plan. More information is in chapter 4.

Chapter 4—Supporting Information

Parks Department

There are no people employed by the Noble County Parks Board.

Budget Information

There is no allocation made for the Noble County Parks Board.

ADA Accessibility

Accessibility & Universal Design

Noble County is dedicated to ensuring that any public parks/facilities are accessible to everyone. The county is committed to providing universal design to realize this dedication.

Policies & Transition Plan

The Noble County Board of Commissioners passed Resolution 2012-05 to prevent discrimination of the physically and mentally disabled relating to employment and access to public facilities. The Noble County ADA Transition Plan can be found here: <http://nobleco.squarespace.com/ada-procedure>.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), Noble County will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: Noble County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the ADA.

Effective Communication: Noble County will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in Noble County’s programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: Noble County will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcome in Noble County offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of Noble County, should contact the of ADA Coordinator Zachary Smith at 260-636-2124, fax 260-636-2542 or e-mail to zsmith@nobleco.us as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require Noble County to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of Noble County is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to ADA Coordinator Zachary Smith at 260-636-2124, fax 260- 636-2542 or e-mailed to zsmith@nobleco.us.

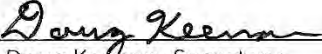
Noble County will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:
ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended);
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As Amended);
AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (As Amended)

The Noble County Parks Board has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.



Ray Scott, President

Attest 

Doug Keenan, Secretary

Date March 27, 2019

Public Participation Overview

Methodology

The Parks Board used both social media and traditional print media to promote and share information about the planning process. Citizens and interested parties were invited to complete the parks survey and attend the first open house meeting by both means. Additionally, the local newspaper, *The News-Sun*, has published articles about the progress made on the plan. Those articles are enclosed as an appendix together with the examples of the advertisements used to promote the stakeholder input.

Survey

The survey used for the plan was mostly based off of the survey that was utilized for the previous parks plan. Some elements were revised, and some removed in order to ensure that the survey was accessible to the public and not cumbersome to complete. The complete survey as it appeared online is available in the appendix.

Results

The results can be viewed in the appendix to this document.

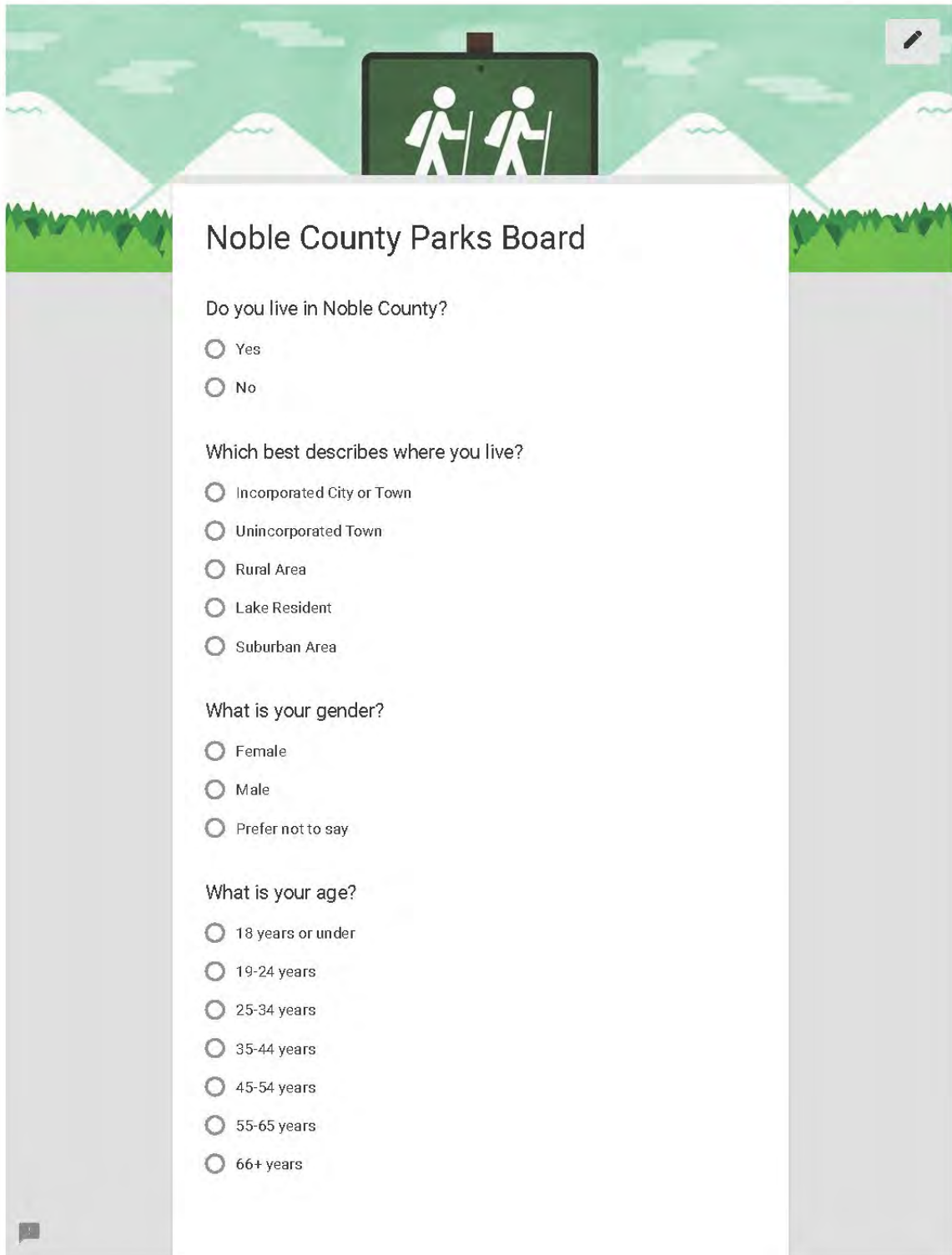
Public Meeting

A public meeting was held on December 5, 2018. The sign-in sheet from that meeting is available as an appendix. There were five members of the public present excluding all park board members and the plan author.

Appendices

Appendix A – Parks Survey

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Noble County Parks Board

Do you live in Noble County?

Yes

No

Which best describes where you live?

Incorporated City or Town

Unincorporated Town

Rural Area

Lake Resident

Suburban Area

What is your gender?

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

What is your age?

18 years or under

19-24 years

25-34 years

35-44 years

45-54 years

55-65 years

66+ years

How many people live in your household?

Your answer _____

How Important is outdoor recreation to you?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Undesirable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Important

On average, how often do members of your household visit an area park throughout the year?

- Never
- Daily
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a year
- Other: _____

What type of activities do you enjoy in parks and recreational facilities?

- Archery/Shooting Sports
- Bicycling
- Boat/Canoe/Kayak
- Camping
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Jogging
- Playing on a Playground
- Picnics
- Relaxation
- Sports (tennis, basketball, soccer, etc.)
- Swimming
- Walking
- Wildlife Viewing/Nature Walks
- Winter Sports (Skiing, Ice Skating, Sledding, etc.)
- Other: _____

Check the top five (5) most important park activities to you and your family.

- Archery/Shooting Sports
- Amusement Park
- Ampitheater - Music Programs
- Field Sports: Baseball, Soccer, Football
- Boating/Fishng
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Court Sports: Basketball, Volleyball, Tennis
- Historical Programs
- Public Beach
- Playground Areas
- Pools/Waterslides
- Picnic/Pavilions
- Golf, Disc Golf, Foot Golf
- Miniature Golf
- Educational Programs
- Equestrian Trails
- Ice Skating Rink
- Skateboarding Pakr
- Natural Areas/Wildlife Habitats
- Camping/RV Sites
- Water Park/Splash Pad
- Wildlife/Wetland Preserves
- Walking/Hiking Trails
- None - We do not use parks or recreational facilities
- Other: _____

If you do travel, about how far do you travel to reach your activity?

- 20 miles or fewer per trip
- 21 to 49 miles per trip
- 50-99 miles per trip
- 100+ miles per trip
- N/A

How far are you willing to travel to reach your favorite park or recreational area?

- 0-10 miles
- 11-20 miles
- 21-30 miles
- 31-40 miles
- 40+ miles

If you do not frequent any parks in Noble County, please mark the answer(s) that best explain the reason(s) why.

	Yes	Maybe	No
Lack of Time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of Available Parks and Programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor Health/Mobility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parks are too far away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The parks I want to visit are not available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of Interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel Unsafe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park and equipment is not handicap accessible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
N/A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
We need more parks and recreation facilities in Noble County	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have a sufficient number of recreational opportunities in Noble County	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Noble County Parks and Recreation should secure land for future park and recreation opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the event that Noble County could secure land grants or donations for future parks and recreational projects in the unincorporated areas of Noble County, what other funding sources would you agree should be used for additional acquisition and maintenance costs?

- Tax Revenue Only
- Use Fees Only
- Both Tax Revenue and User Fees

Please select the answer that best describes the level of need for the following activities in the unincorporated areas of Noble County:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Court Sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Field Sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Beach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Swimming Pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bike Trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Walking Trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RV Park or Campground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Splash Pad/Water Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ice Skating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor Amphitheater	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wetland/Nature Preserves	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the priority Noble County Park and Recreation Department should give towards the following programs:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Preschool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Junior High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Young Adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mid-Aged Adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior Citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special Populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you believe there is a sufficient number of parks and recreation facilities in the unincorporated areas of Noble County?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

What do you believe is the greatest need for the Parks Board to consider in the future?

Your answer

SUBMIT

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Appendix B – Survey Results

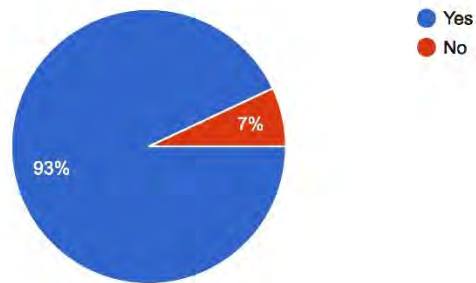


Noble County Parks Board

43 responses

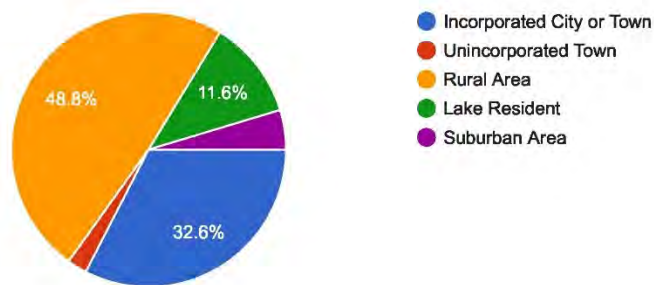
Do you live in Noble County?

43 responses



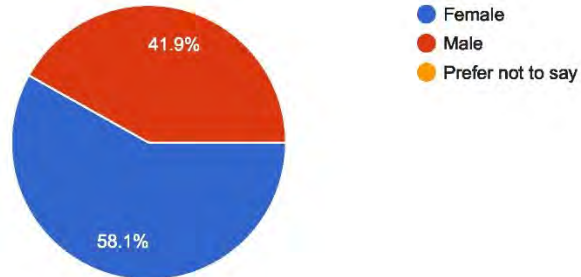
Which best describes where you live?

43 responses



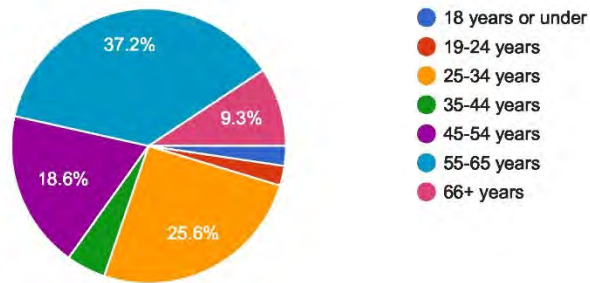
What is your gender?

43 responses



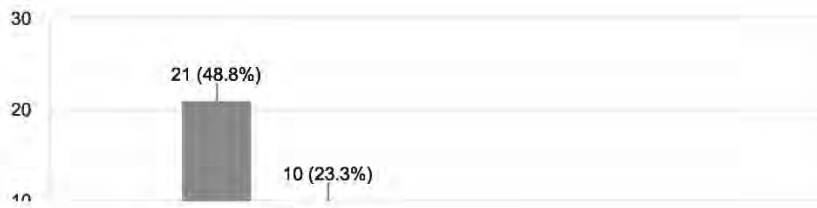
What is your age?

43 responses



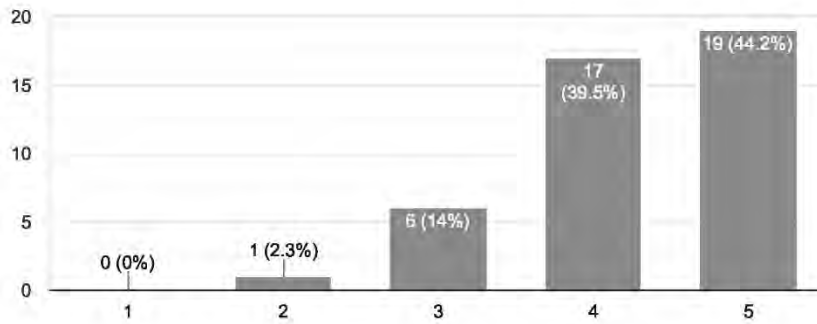
How many people live in your household?

43 responses



How Important is outdoor recreation to you?

43 responses

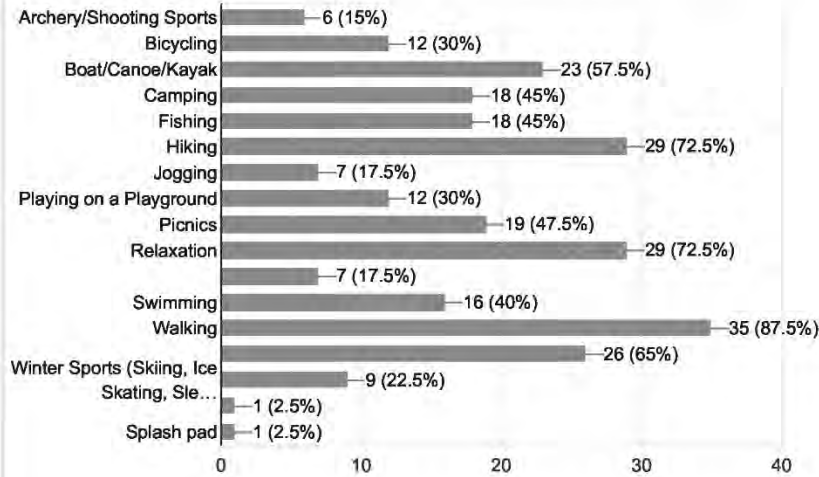


On average, how often do members of your household visit an area park throughout the year?

43 responses

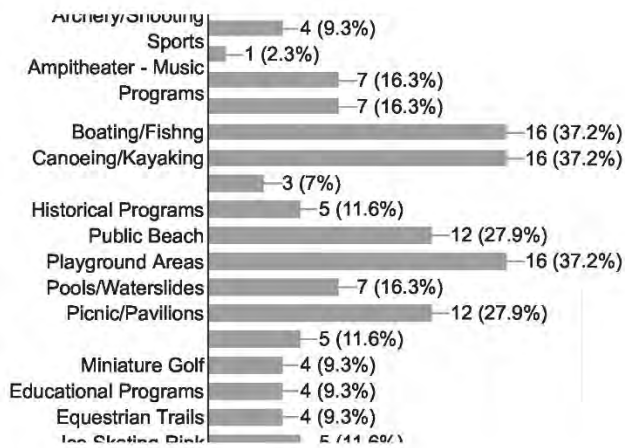
What type of activities do you enjoy in parks and recreational facilities?

40 responses



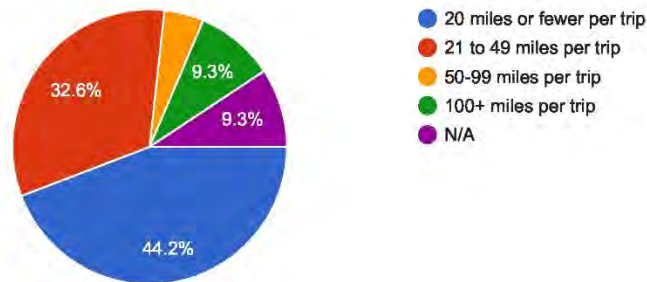
Check the top five (5) most important park activities to you and your family.

43 responses



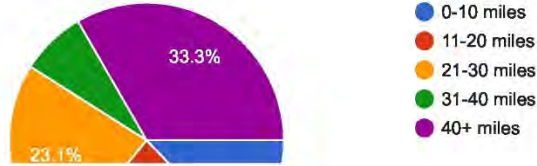
If you do travel, about how far do you travel to reach your activity?

43 responses

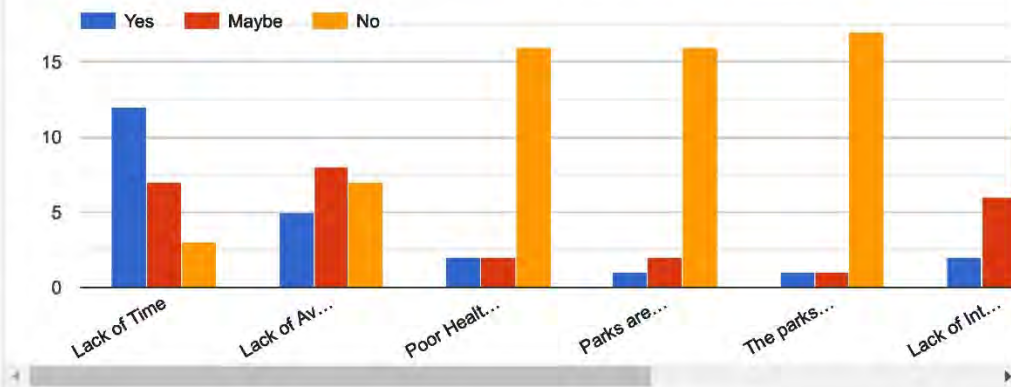


How far are you willing to travel to reach your favorite park or recreational area?

39 responses



If you do not frequent any parks in Noble County, please mark the answer(s) that best explain the reason(s) why.

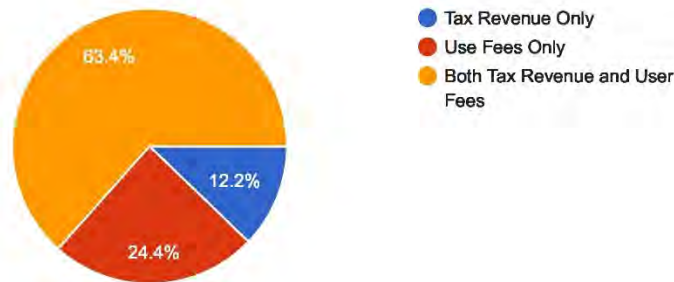


Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements

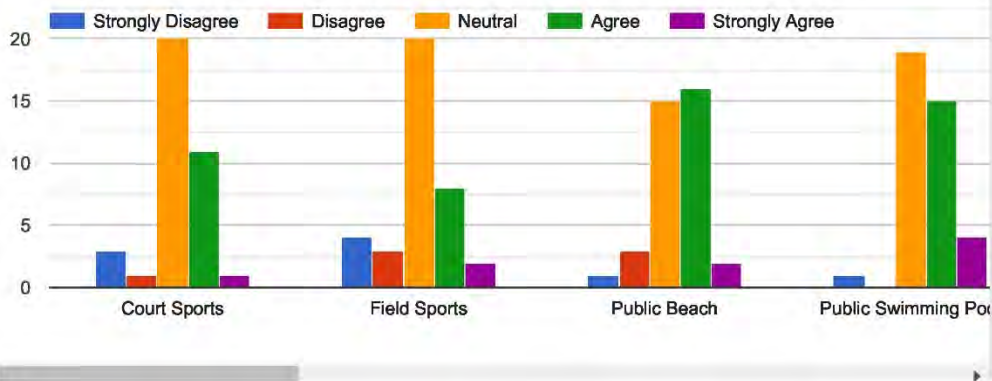


In the event that Noble County could secure land grants or donations for future parks and recreational projects in the unincorporated areas of Noble County, what other funding sources would you agree should be used for additional acquisition and maintenance costs?

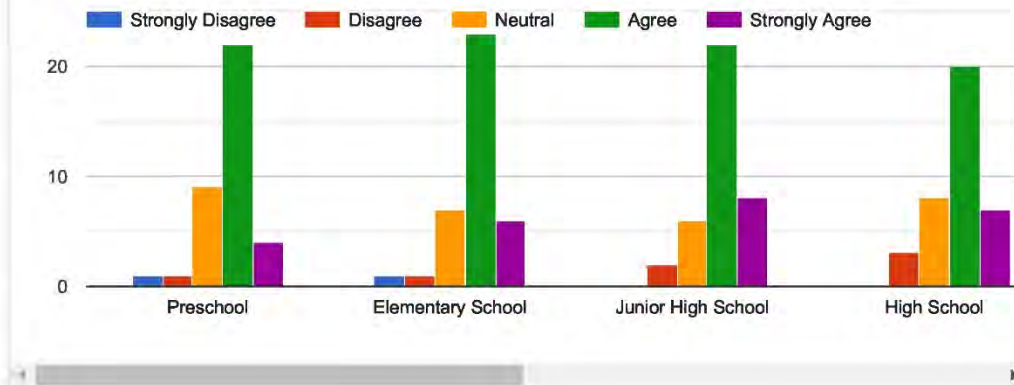
41 responses



Please select the answer that best describes the level of need for the following activities in the unincorporated areas of Noble County:

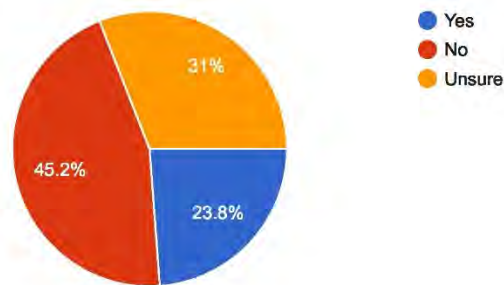


Please indicate the priority Noble County Park and Recreation Department should give towards the following programs:



Do you believe there is a sufficient number of parks and recreation facilities in the unincorporated areas of Noble County?

42 responses



What do you believe is the greatest need for the Parks Board to consider in the future?

24 responses

Trail system for biking/running/walking. Mountain bike trails would be great too!

Keeping the parks that they have properly maintained

new locations and extent the rails to trails

Better dissemination of information

Keep what we have and keep them clean and safe

To have county parks as surrounding counties do.

Getting the County Council to understand how important a park system is for citizens

More hot weather activities for young children

Free and safe access to parks for hiking, nature, (accessibility for Seniors and less mobile adults), etc. Stop taking away farmground.

Projects like the Fishing Line Trail connecting rec. areas

trail development to link all communities in Noble County

teens and adults need things to do to distract their minds to reduce anxiety so they don't turn to drugs

Public fishing areas, please.

The cost to tax payers

Prepare for and educate about climate change - build infrastructure to withstand droughts and floods, build with renewable energy installation in mind.

dog park

Bike trail development

Amphitheater

Connected walking/biking trails

Use the current resources already available in our community. Chain O Lakes is in our backyard and locals hardly ever visit anymore. We have great opportunities in our communities but people just need to use them!

more multi-use trails

Family friendly activities for all ages. Outdoor concerts, guided educational nature walks (possibly with maps and points of interest highlighted), community gardens etc.

goal oriented plans with deadlines

Taking care of what we have and improving it

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Appendix C – Survey Ad



Noble County, Indiana Government



October 31 at 9:59 AM · 🌐

Parks and Recreation, anyone?

Help the Noble County Parks Board with their new Master Plan by completing the survey at the link below!

<http://bit.ly/NCPB2018survey>



320
People Reached

43
Engagements

Boost Post

Kaitlyn Sproles, Chris Magnuson and Amy Norris

4 Shares

Like

Comment

Share



Appendix E – Newspaper Articles

YOUR WEEKLY CIRCULARS [CLICK HERE!](#)

https://www.kpcnews.com/news/latest/newssun/article_3007e100-a1f8-588d-9ba0-8e5d77c9a0b3.html

Plan director offers help to park board

Noble County Park Board could become grant eligible

By Matt Getts
mgetts@kpcmedia.com Feb 28, 2018

ALBION — Game changer.

On Wednesday, moments after two Noble County Park Board members discussed the idea of letting its five-year master plan lapse, in came Noble County Plan Director Kenneth Hughes riding a figurative white horse.

Hughes had park board members doing an about-face on the idea of updating their plan after offering his department's assistance — including money to fund the effort.



The Park Board took no formal action on Hughes' offer of assistance, but said they were receptive to the idea. A vote on the matter could come as early as the board's March 28 meeting.

The Park Board had discussed not updating its five-year master plan, which runs out in 2019, at its meeting in January. At that time, members questioned the need. With no budget, the park board wasn't able to apply for any grants, which normally include a local match that the board could not foresee being able to come up with.

A current five-year master plan is a requirement for applying for state grants through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The Park Board would have had to apply for local grants to get the five-year master plan updated. With no prospects of giving anything back to the community in the form of grants, the board seemed to be leaning toward letting the master plan lapse without asking for the approximately \$10,000 it would take to do the project itself.

"We don't want to keep going to the well and then not do anything," board member John Metzger said at Wednesday's meeting.

Then Hughes spoke, and changed everything.

He said he had a small pool of money he could use to pay for an update to the master plan.

"I think it's enough to get an update done that meets DNR requirements," Hughes said. "I wouldn't want to see the park board close the door on funding."

By doing the update in conjunction with the ongoing Noble County master plan, Hughes said it would be good timing.

“Parks are a big component” in quality of life, Hughes told the park board. “It is very clear we want a more walkable community.”

Hughes said the Noble County Park Board, if it has a current five-year master plan, could apply for grants by collaborating with a non-profit group such as Noble Trails. For example, the matching portion for a grant could come from funds Noble Trails has already invested in a project.

Hughes said he could also possibly assist in the grant application process.

The Noble County Park Board was established by a Noble County Council resolution in 2010 as an unfunded government body.

“We’ve done fairly well in spite of that,” board president Ray Scott said.

The board has been doing what it can to promote recreational opportunities in Noble County, including the creation of a website with an interactive map showing such things as golf courses, parks and trails. The board has also hosted a walking program.

Doing such things without any money has been problematic.

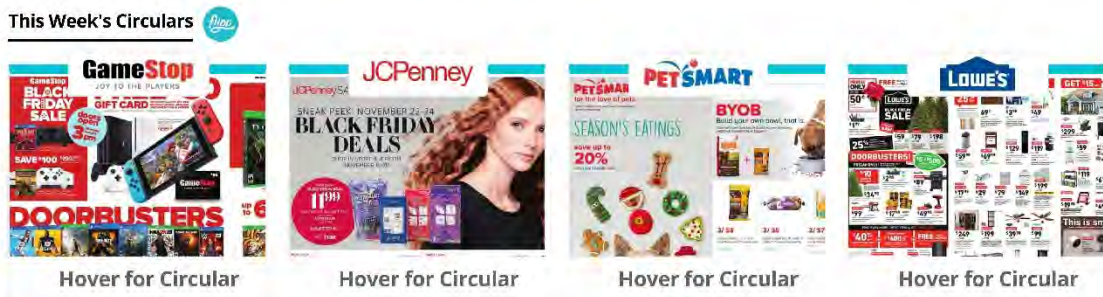
“We’ve been struggling,” Metzger said. “No doubt about it. We’re still struggling to get people to know what we have here.”

Also at Wednesday’s meeting, the board set tentative dates and locations for its Take a Stroll Saturday program.

Events have been preliminary scheduled for:

- May 26 at Parkview Noble Hospital’s walking trail — in partnership with the Parkview Noble Hospital Center for Healthy Living;
- June 2 at the Fishing Line Trail near Rome City — in partnership with Noble Trails.
- July 28 on the Elkhart River — the canoe/kayaking event will be held in partnership with the West Lakes Association;
- Aug. 25 at Bixler Lake Park in Kendallville — held as part of a barbecue cook-off event in partnership with the Kendallville Parks and Recreation Board; and
- Sept. 22 at Chain O’ Lakes State Park — held in partnership with the state park on its National Public Land Day. There is no admission to the park on this date.

This Week's Circulars



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https://www.kpcnews.com/news/latest/newssun/article_779e08f3-0e0a-5cf1-9729-0df301c65015.html

County parks board to update master plan

By Matt Getts
mgetts@kpcmedia.com Mar 28, 2018

ALBION — The Noble County Park Board will be upgrading its five-year master plan.

The board had been on the verge of letting its current plan lapse, or at least seemed to be leaning that way at meetings in January and February. Having a master plan is a necessity for applying for state grants. Since the group had no matching funds available to apply for state grants, some board members considered it unnecessary to go through the expense and work of updating its master plan.

But at the group's February meeting, Noble County Plan Director Kenneth Hughes offered to have his office do the work. Hughes pointed out that by working in conjunction with non-profits, the Noble County Park Board could use work done by those non-profits as its share of matching funds in making grant applications.



During Wednesday's meeting at the Noble County Public Library Central Branch in Albion, board member Scott Allen motioned to have Hughes' office do the work. Board member John Metzger made the second, and the measure passed unanimously.

The work will be done in conjunction with Noble County updating its master plan.

"It's great we're going to be part of that process," board president Ray Scott said.

The board also finalized its plans for its Take a Stroll Saturday program, an effort to get people walking outside and to showcase the outdoor recreational opportunities available in Noble County.

Those walks will be:

- May 19 at Parkview Noble Hospital's walking trail — in partnership with the Parkview Noble Hospital Center for Healthy Living;
- June 2 at the Fishing Line Trail near Rome City — in partnership with Noble Trails.
- July 28 on the Elkhart River — the canoe/kayaking event will be held in partnership with the West Lakes Association;
- Aug. 25 at Bixler Lake Park in Kendallville — held as part of a barbecue cook-off event in partnership with the Kendallville Parks and Recreation Board; and

• Sept. 22 at Chain O' Lakes State Park — held in partnership with the state park on its National Public Land Day. There is no admission to the park on this date.

Allen also updated the board on Noble Trails second annual 5K event.

The registration period for the 2018 Fishing Line Trail 5K Run/Walk is now open.

The 5K Run/Walk will be held on Saturday, April 28, with registration and check-in opening at 7 a.m., and the race starting at 8 a.m.

The race will begin at the Gene Stratton Porter State Historic Site in Rome City. Duplicating last year's race, the route follows a section of local roads before entering the Fishing Line Trail. The race then travels back to the finish line at Gene Stratton-Porter.

Registration can be made nobletrails.org.

For more information on the 2018 Fishing Line Trail 5K Run/Walk, contact Terry Gaff, race chairman, at gaff.terry@gmail.com or voice mail at 242-1100.

Matt Getts

This Week's Circulars



Hover for Circular



Hover for Circular



Hover for Circular



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https://www.kpcnews.com/albionnewera/article_256c1bbe-6d04-5419-9e2e-co854e1ed177.html

County park board notes outdoor activities

By MATT GETTIS mgettis@kpcmedia.com Aug 29, 2018

ALBION — People are taking advantage of outdoor recreational activities in Noble County.

Even if they aren't so much participating in the Noble County Park Board's "Take a Stroll Saturday" initiative.

During the Aug. 22 meeting of the park board, member James Haddock announced that five people participated in the kayak event held in late July on the Elkhart River close to the West Lakes Chain. One of those participants was park board member John Metzger.



While turnout for the actual event wasn't what was hoped, Haddock and Metzger both reported plenty of activity on the river.

Metzger came across several bass fisherman who were participating in a local tourney. The tournament itself was centered on a local lake, but multiple boats ventured onto the Elkhart River to try their luck at finding bass on that body of water.

The event was held in conjunction with the West Lakes Association, which had planned a river clean-up event. Haddock estimated that 35 people were helping clear the river of debris, with the goal of facilitating water flow downriver from where flooding has occurred on the chain.

"They were up to their chests in seaweed and muck, pulling out branches," Haddock told the board. "They were an organized group."

Haddock also updated the board on a proposed Noble County Lakes Council. An informational meeting discussing the creation of such a council was held Aug. 2 at the Orange Township in Rome City.

The group seems likely to focus on water quality and clarity, flooding and vegetation and sediment control as some of its top priorities.

The idea for a countywide lakes council was one of several ideas residents on the flood-prone West Lakes chain west of Rome City came up with as they banded together to find ways to address their own situation. In coming up with a Top 10 list of priorities, they realized the main issues they wanted to address were more universal than just their section of the county.

Haddock said working with the council as it forms seems a good fit for the Noble County Park Board.

"Our common interest is use of these waterways," Haddock said. "I think it's a good thing."

Board member Scott Allen reported that the final property had been obtained by Noble Trails to finish paving from Angling Road north of Kendallville to the Gene Stratton Porter State Historical Site, a distance of approximately 5-6 miles.

Noble County Plan Director Kenneth Hughes was impressed with what the non-profit had been able to accomplish.


“The sheer magnitude of what they’ve been able to do is amazing,” Hughes said.

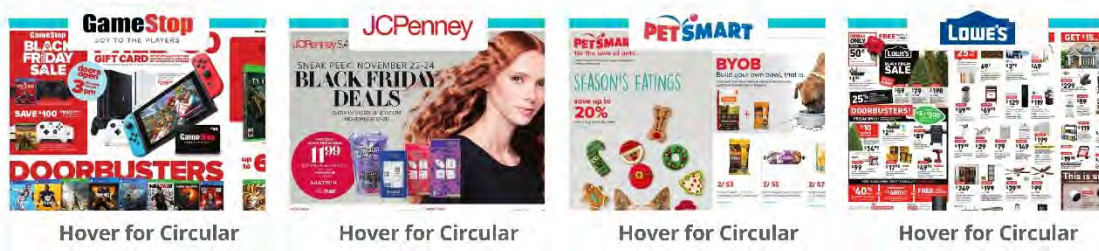
Hughes was on-hand to update the park board on the progress he was making in regards to its master plan.

Hughes said a 75-percent draft would be finished by mid-October. Before the park board can finalize its plans, it has to conduct a survey of what county residents want to see as far as county recreational opportunities. A public meeting must also be held.

The board’s master plan needs to be completed by Jan. 15. Completing a master plan is required to make the board eligible to partner with other groups, such as Noble Trails in pursuing state grants.

Matt Getts

This Week's Circulares 



GameStop: BLACK FRIDAY SALE, JOY TO THE PLAYERS, GIFT CARD, SAVE \$100, DOORBUSTERS

JCPenney: SNEAK PEEK NOVEMBER 22-24, BLACK FRIDAY DEALS, SAVE UP TO 20%

PETSMART: SEASON'S FATINGS, 20% OFF, BYOB

LOWE'S: 50% OFF, 25% OFF, DOORBUSTERS, 40% OFF

Hover for Circular Hover for Circular Hover for Circular Hover for Circular



YOUR WEEKLY CIRCULARS [CLICK HERE!](#)

https://www.kpcnews.com/newssun/article_d35e1315-d4bd-5d32-83cb-306d36325957.html

County park board reviews long-term plan

By MATT GETTIS mgetts@kpcmedia.com Sep 27, 2018

ALBION — The Noble County Park Board has tweaked its vision of the future.

During Wednesday’s discussion of the board’s five-year master plan presented by Noble County Plan Director Kenneth Hughes, the board discussed adding an item to its action plan.

The preliminary draft submitted for discussion by Hughes listed four action plan items:



- Publicize recreation assets by partnering with the Noble County Convention and Visitors Bureau and GIS Department;
- Work with health leaders to address health issues such as obesity and diabetes by working with the Noble County Health Department and Parkview Noble Hospital;
- Work with child development leaders to focus on programs for child enrichment, partnering with the Dekko Foundation and Community Foundation of Noble County; and
- Increase the miles of trails available to residents by working with Noble Trails and municipal parks departments.

Board member James Haddock suggested adding an action item related trails of the aquatic variety.

“I would like to see an increased emphasis ... for the development of the Elkhart River for recreational purposes,” Haddock said. “I think there’s an increased public interest in it.”



Among other attributes, Noble County is known for its lakes, which draw visitors and residents for recreational purposes.

“I think we already have a good emphasis on lakes,” Haddock said. “I’m talking about flowing waters.”

Haddock and board member John Metzger pointed to progress currently being made by the West Lakes Association to clear the Elkhart River. Clearing the river will decrease flooding, but will also make the river more navigable for people in boats and canoes.

“At least there’s some activity,” Metzger said.


“It’s an asset,” Hughes said. “It needs to be used as one.”

The Noble County Park Board has no funding and no revenue source, so the board primary focuses on support of local recreation and outdoor options in the county as opposed to working on capital projects such as building trails or establishing playgrounds like a city park board funded by tax dollars might.

The board is still seeking input from the public on what community residents want to see as far as recreational offerings in the county. A survey is accessible online at bit.ly/NobleParksPlan, or can be accessed through the Board’s website at noblecoparks.wixsite.com/website. The survey can also be found through a link on the Noble County Facebook page.

The issue of the park department taking over maintenance of the Noble Trails Inc.’s trail system was also discussed. Board member Scott Allen said he did not see that happening until the board could show the Noble County Council the direct financial and economic impact the system has on Noble County.

Matt Getts

This Week's Circulares 



Hover for Circular



Hover for Circular



Hover for Circular



Hover for Circular



YOUR WEEKLY CIRCULARS [CLICK HERE!](#)

https://www.kpcnews.com/newssun/article_006477e5-27e4-5d95-9db7-91cfea41df54.html

County parks master plan on schedule

By MATT GETTIS mgetts@kpcmedia.com Oct 25, 2018

ALBION — The Noble County Park Board’s five-year master plan is on schedule, according to Noble County Park Director Kenneth Hughes.

Hughes updated the board at its meeting held Wednesday at the Noble County Public Library’s Central Branch in Albion.

A draft of the plan needs to be sent to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources by Jan. 15, 2019. The final draft must be submitted by April 15, 2019. The master plan is a blueprint, of sorts, that the board will follow as it sets its coming agenda for the next five years.



A completed five-year master plan on file with the DNR is a requirement to make the park board eligible for certain state grants.

“We’re on track,” Hughes told the board. “As far as the DNR is concerned, we are going to have a compliant plan.”

As part of the requirements for the plan’s acceptance, the park board has scheduled a public input session for 6 p.m. on Dec. 5 in the Dekko Room at the Noble County Office Complex-South. Public input is important in determining the board’s direction as it shapes its master plan.

Hughes has also been researching ways to address the park board’s main obstacle — lack of funding.

The board was approved as a non-funded entity by the Noble County Council. Hughes would like to see that changed.

Hughes has begun taking a sampling of what other counties do as far as funding their county parks. Counties that do fund a countywide system generally fund it to the tune of between \$6-\$7 per capita, Hughes said. LaGrange County’s park system is funded at a rate of \$12 per capita, according to Hughes.



Hughes said he will broach the idea of starting at perhaps \$2 per capita with the Noble County Council this January. There is no guarantee the council will agree to any funding.

“That’s a very initial early thought,” Hughes said.

A preliminary part of the five-year master plan for the Noble County Park Board would involve an ambitious project concerning the Elkhart River. The action item would involve purchasing the title to the river bed from Duke’s Bridge to Cosperville, allowing the park board to create a canoe/kayak trail along that stretch of the river.

Duke’s Bridge is located on C.R. 125W, midway between C.R. 900N and C.R. 1050N.

The idea came about from a meeting Hughes had with a member of the Acres Land Trust.

“We mainly focused on the Elkhart River, mainly looking at it like a river trail,” Hughes said.

The board has taken no action on the idea, and would need significant funding to make it a reality.

Diann Scott, president of the West Lakes Association, was in attendance at Wednesday’s meeting, and she requested to be kept in the loop about projects like this within the West Lakes Area.

“We’re working a lot on the same things,” Scott said.

She said her group was attempting to purchase rights-of-way to certain sections along that proposed trail to allow for access to workers to help clean up that area to keep the water moving freely.

Scott said work is continuing on the creation of a conservancy district for the West Lakes area. If created, the conservancy district would become a taxing body which would enable it to collect taxes.

Matt Getts

Appendix F – Public Meeting Ad

A vertical poster for a public meeting. The background is a photograph of a dirt path covered in fallen leaves, winding through a dense forest of tall trees. The sky is visible through the canopy. The poster features several text elements: a red banner at the top with white text, a large yellow rounded rectangle in the center with red text, and two yellow banners at the bottom with dark text. A circular logo for Noble County, Indiana, is in the bottom right corner.

Noble County Parks Plan

Public Meeting
December 5, 6pm

County South Complex
2090 N SR 9, Albion, Ind.



Appendix G – Public Meeting Press Release



2090 North State Road 9, Suite A
Albion, Indiana 46701
Email: planning@nobleco.org
Phone: (260) 636-7217

For Immediate Release: November 1, 2018

Noble County Parks and Recreation Planning Open House

The Noble County Parks and Recreation Board together with the Noble County Plan Commission invite residents of Noble County to the Parks Planning Open House on December 5, 2018 at 6:00 PM in the Dekko Room of the South Complex. (Located at 2090 N State Road 9, Albion, Ind.)

What **Parks Planning Open House**
When December 5, 2018 at 6:00 PM
Where Noble County South Complex
2090 N State Road 9
Albion, Indiana 46701

The Parks Board is putting together its 2019-2024 Parks Master Plan and is looking for public input on what needs there are for parks and recreation.

Additionally, the Parks Plan Survey is available until December 7 at bit.ly/NCPB2018survey. Comments are encouraged and appreciated.

For additional information, please contact Kenneth Hughes, Plan Director at (260) 636-7217.

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Appendix H – Presentation

Noble County Parks Plan

December 5, 2018

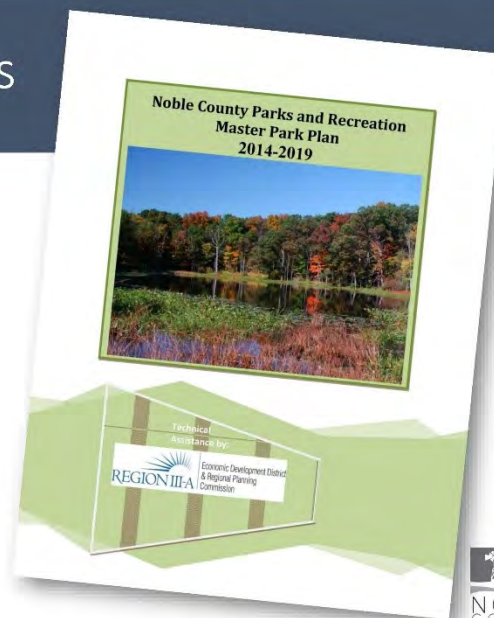
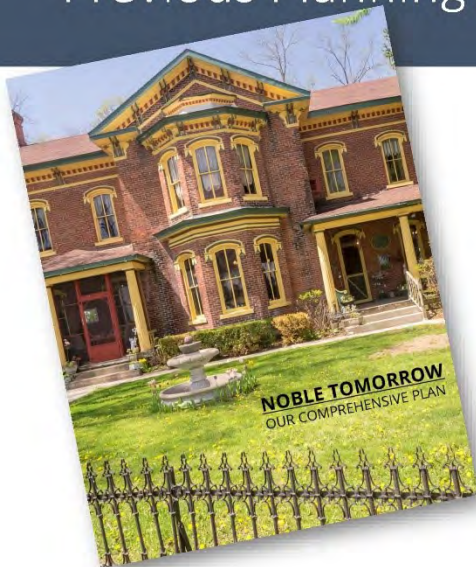


Agenda

- Previous Planning Efforts
- Survey Results
- Needs Analysis
 - Brainstorming
 - Prioritizing
- Next Steps



Previous Planning Efforts



2014 Master Plan

- Update needs assessment mapping for easier use
- Update NCPRB website
- Work with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to publicize recreational assets
- Work with Health Dept and Parkview to determine if a correlation between recreational sites and unhealthy population sectors
- Work the Dekko Foundation and other youth-focused groups to promote youth programs
- Be prepared to assist others with proposals to address unmet recreational needs



Noble Tomorrow – Comprehensive Plan

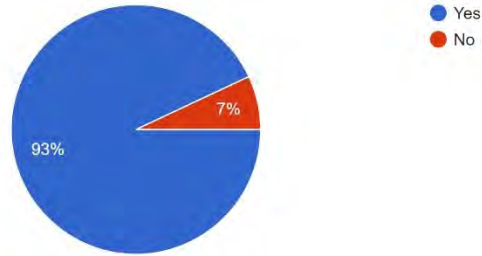
- Policies
 - Provide a variety of recreation opportunities
 - Support the Noble County Parks Board in establishing recreation opportunities
 - Partner with existing organizations to increase collaboration for trails
- Actions Steps
 - Ligonier to West Noble Trail
 - Cromwell to West Noble Trail
 - Kendallville to LaOtto (through Avilla) Trail
 - Albion to Chain O' Lakes Trail
 - Albion to West Noble Trains



Survey Results

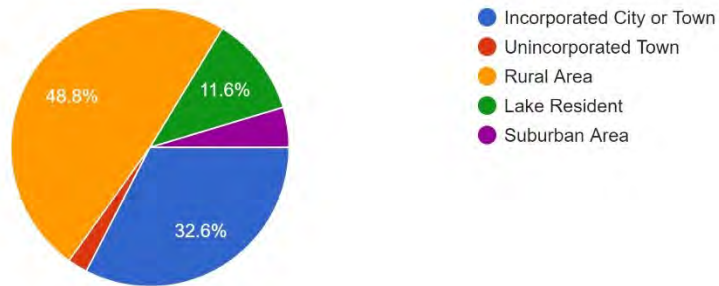
Do you live in Noble County?

43 responses



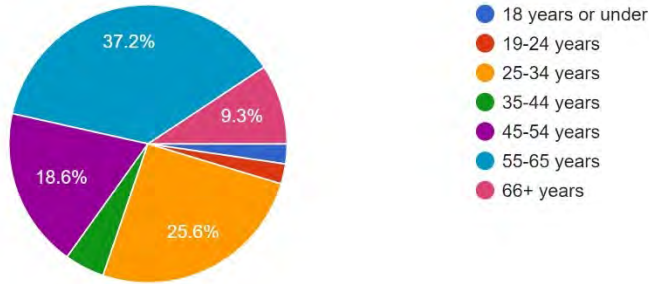
Which best describes where you live?

43 responses



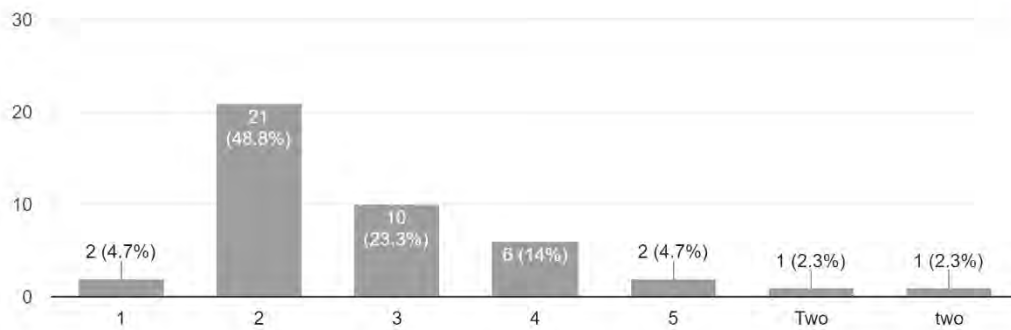
What is your age?

43 responses



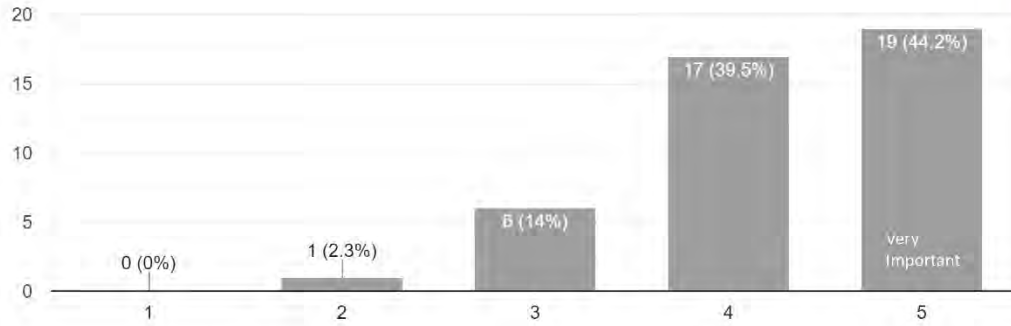
How many people live in your household?

43 responses



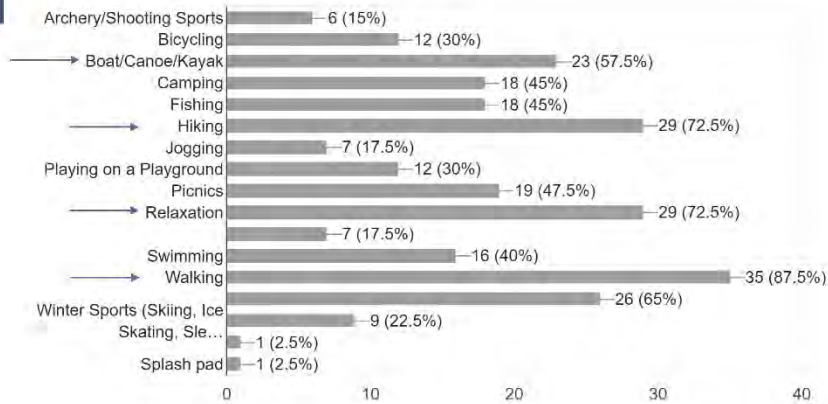
How Important is outdoor recreation to you?

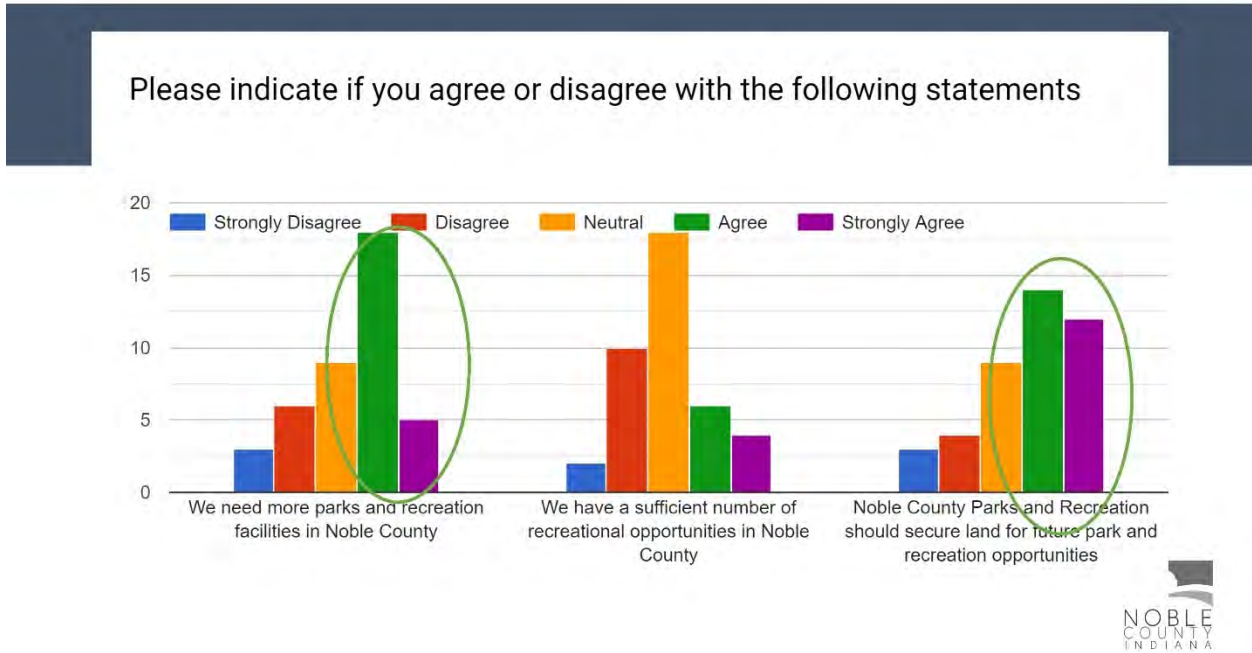
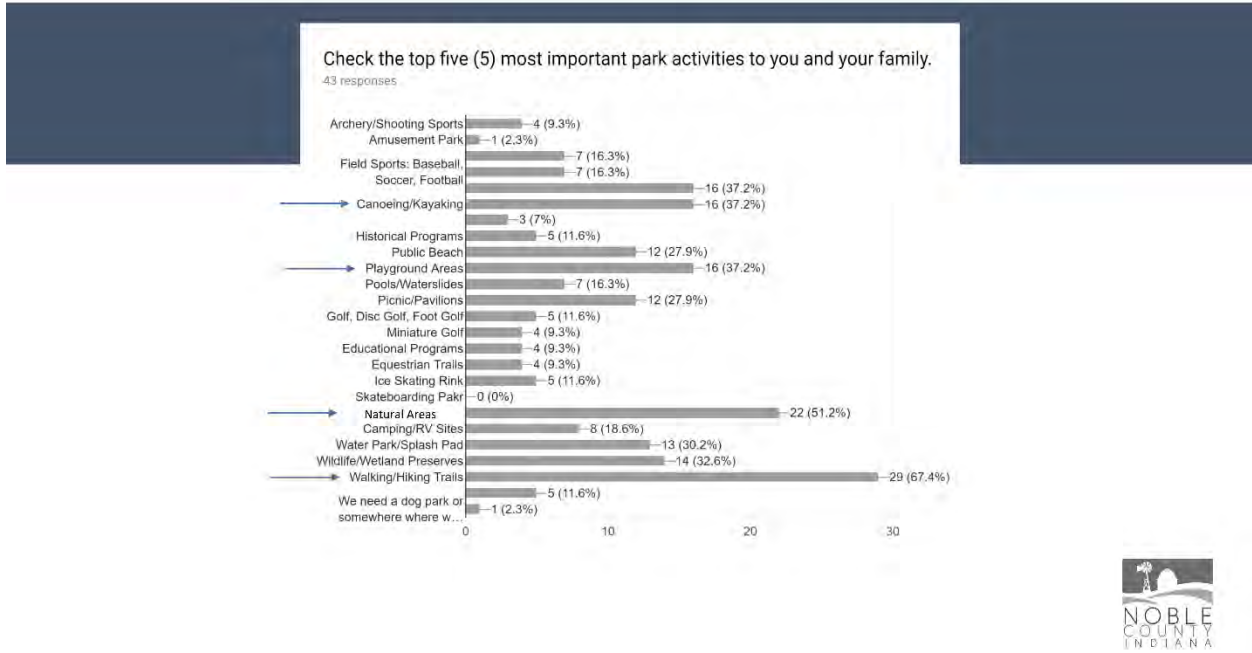
43 responses



What type of activities do you enjoy in parks and recreational facilities?

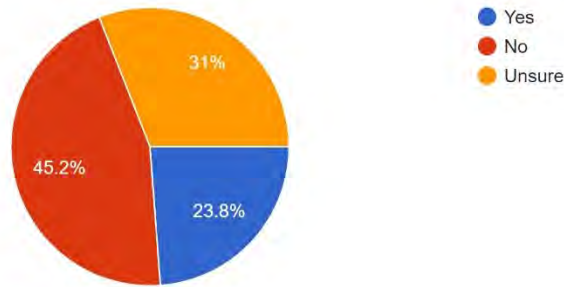
40 responses





Do you believe there is a sufficient number of parks and recreation facilities in the unincorporated areas of Noble County?

42 responses



Activity	Score
[Walking Trails]	0.878
[Nature Center]	0.568
[Wetland/Nature Preserves]	0.564
[Public Swimming Pool]	0.538
[Bike Trails]	0.537
[Outdoor Amphitheater]	0.486
[Public Beach]	0.405
[Playground]	0.378
[Splash Pad/Water Park]	0.314
[RV Park or Campground]	0.297
[Ice Skating]	0.270
[Court Sports]	0.167
[Field Sports]	0.027



Survey Comments

- Trail system for biking/running/walking. Mountain bike trails would be great too!
- Keeping the parks that they have properly maintained
- new locations and extent the rails to trails
- Better dissemination of information
- Keep what we have and keep them clean and safe
- To have county parks as surrounding counties do.
- Getting the County Council to understand how important a park system is for citizens
- More hot weather activities for young children
- Free and safe access to parks for hiking, nature, (accessibility for Seniors and less mobile adults), etc. Stop taking away farmground.
- Projects like the Fishing Line Trail connecting rec. areas
- trail development to link all communities in Noble County
- teens and adults need things to do to distract their minds to reduce anxiety so they don't turn to drugs
- Public fishing areas, please.
- The cost to tax payers
- Prepare for and educate about climate change - build infrastructure to withstand droughts and floods, build with renewable energy installation in mind.
- dog park
- Bike trail development
- Amphitheater
- Connected walking/biking trails
- Use the current resources already available
- in our community. Chain O Lakes is in our backyard and locals hardly ever visit anymore. We have great opportunities in our communities but people just need to use them!
- more multi-use trails
- Family friendly activities for all ages. Outdoor concerts, guided educational nature walks (possibly with maps and points of interest highlighted), community gardens etc.
- goal oriented plans with deadlines
- Taking care of what we have and improving it



Essential, Contributing, Detracting, Missing

Essential	Contributing
Detracting	Missing



Needs Assessment

- Indoor Recreation
 - Gymnasium
 - Fitness Center
- Outdoor Recreation
 - Sports Fields
 - Public Pool
 - Playground
- Specialty
 - Ice Skating
- Trails
 - Walking/Running
 - Biking
 - Canoeing
- Public Beach
- Natural Areas/Preserves



Initial Action Plan

- Publicize recreation assets
- Work with health leaders to address health issues
- Increase the miles of trails available
- Develop water based recreational opportunities on the Elkhart
- Work with child development leader to focus on programs for child enrichment



Priority Mapping



Next Steps

Initial draft completed by December 15 for public and board review

Submit initial draft to DNR by January 15

Revise draft for final DNR approval by April 15



Appendix I – Public Meeting Sign-In



2090 North State Road 9, Suite A
Albion, Indiana 46701
Email: planning@nobleco.org
Phone: (260) 636-7217

Noble County Parks Master Plan Meeting

Name	Email Address
Scott Allen	
Jeff Boyle	
Tim Haddock	
RAY SCOTT	
John Metzger	
Christy Ratliff	
Linda Gray	

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Appendix J – Legal Notice of Public Hearing

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Date: March 13, 2019
NS,2056152,3/13,20,hspaxlp

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given the Noble County Parks and Recreation Board will hold a public hearing on the following matter:

Said public hearing will be held at the Noble County Public Library, 813 E. Main St., Albion, IN at 10:00 A.M. on: Wednesday, March 27, 2019.

Public Hearing and Consideration of the Noble County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Copies of the plan are available at the office of the Noble County Plan Commission.

Objections and Comments: Written objections or comments may be filed with the Parks Board and will be considered at any hearing.

Continuance of Public Hearing: At the Parks Board discretion, the public hearing may be continued to other dates.

NS,2056127,3/13,hspaxlp

LEGAL NOTICE

Appendix K – Map

