

# PARKS & PEOPLE



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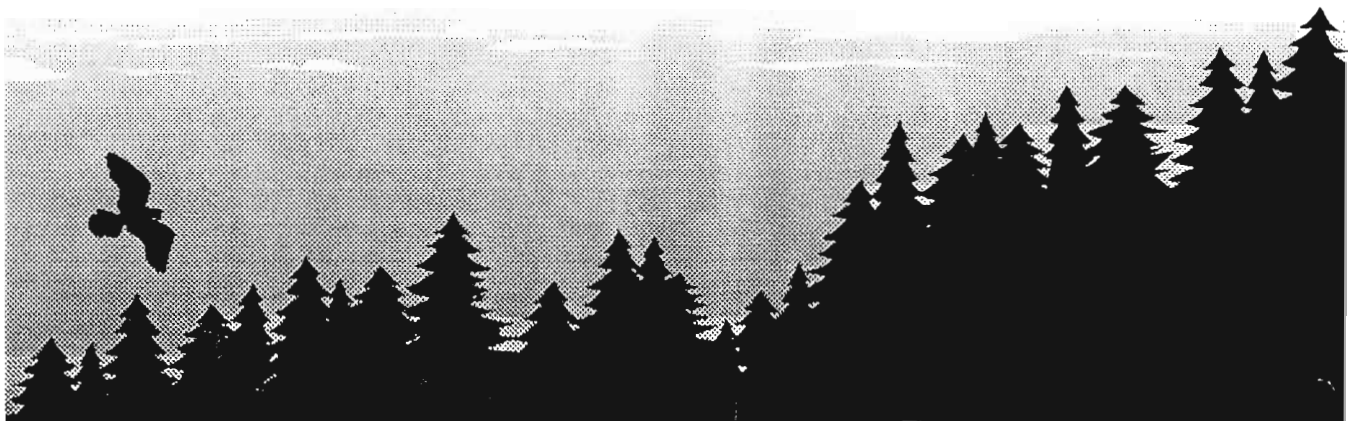


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## I. INTRODUCTION

## PARKS AND PEOPLE

When we chose the topic "Parks and People", it seemed to be an easy topic to research. WELL WE WERE WRONG! It seems the word "Park" is quite deceiving. I looked up the word "Park" in the Webster dictionary; A few examples given : 1. A large area, often of forested land reserved from settlement and maintained in its natural state for public use. 2. A tract of land maintained by a city or town as a place of beauty or for public recreation. In records and reports a "Park" can be a number of things; a school, a church, a baseball or soccer field, a basketball court, golf course and any other place people might gather for recreation.

A few examples of existing recreational facilities in Hendricks County would be: Public - city/town parks, schools, baseball/soccer fields. Commercial - any business that provides recreation for profit. Private - non-profit organizations such as churches and civic organizations.

A park system is a composite of recreational and natural areas each existing to meet the public's recreation need in a geographical area. The classification for parks are as follows: Mini parks, Neighborhood parks, District parks, Regional parks, Large Urban parks, State parks and park reserves, Special Feature parks.

So now you can see why the word "Park" is deceiving!!

Each person in our group chose an area of further explanation of the topic "Parks and People":  
Yvonne will explain Facts and Figures, Projections, and Assessments.  
Karen will explain Rails and Trails.  
David will discuss Friendship Park in Plainfield.

II. PARK ASSESSMENTS AND NEEDS

In 1993 the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI conducted a recreation study to provide information and update the 1983 Comprehensive Plan. The majority of this information is from that study.

This study included an inventory of Hendricks Community parks and recreational facilities; a comparison to National standards; a survey of registered voters to obtain perceptions of facilities; and need for additional facilities. This section of the Parks and People Report will summarize some of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs' findings on recreation/parks.

## Hendricks County Recreational Facilities Comparison to National Standards

In 1983 the residents of Hendricks County had access to 83 recreational areas, including 24 public schools, 17 private-for-profit areas, 15 civic areas, 11 municipal parks, 8 church recreational areas, 3 state parks, 2 private non-profit areas, 2 parochial schools, and 1 county recreational area. While this number has risen to 120 recreational areas, not all of the increase can be attributed to newly developed facilities, as some facilities were overlooked in the 1983 inventory.

### **The Standards of Method**

Standards can be used to judge not only the adequacy and impacts of existing facilities, but also needs stemming from development. The standards method of judging the adequacy of facilities assumes that a specific number of acres or facilities are needed to meet the needs of populations of different sizes. The standards approach needs two inputs: 1) an inventory of the facilities, and 2) the population of the planning area. Totals (e.g., acres of park land) are typically divided by the population in thousands, and the ratios of the two are then compared to nationally-accepted standards. For park land, a typical standard is a specific number of acres of park land per 1,000 people (Table 1). Knowing if the ratio is above or below the standard provides a measure of adequacy, allows comparisons, and enables a community to set goals.

The following example, which involves acres of neighborhood parks in Hendricks County, illustrates how to apply standards. First, obtain totals of acreage (e.g., 736 acres of neighborhood parks in Hendricks County). Next, state population in terms of number of thousands (e.g., Hendricks County's population of 75,700 would translate to 75.7). Then divide totals by population in number of thousands (e.g., 736 acres/75.7 = 9.7 acres per 1,000 persons in Hendricks County). Finally, compare this number to the standard (here 2.5 acres per 1,000) to find out the relative abundance of park acreage. In this case Hendricks County exceeds the standard by nearly a factor of four.

**TABLE 1 Park Standards by Type and Population Served**

PARK TYPE	ACRES/1000 PEOPLE	SIZE RANGE	POPULATION SERVED	SERVICE AREA
Mini-Parks	0.25 - 0.5	2 acres or less	500 - 2,500	sub-neighborhood
Neighborhood Parks	2.5 a/1000	3 - 20 acres	2,000 - 10,000	1/4 - 1/2 mile
District Parks	2.5 a/1000	20 - 100 acres	10,000 - 50,000	1/2 - 3 miles
Large Urban Parks	5.0 a/1000	100+ acres	1 per 50,000 people	1/2 hour driving time
Regional Parks	20.0 a/1000	250+ acres	entire community	within 1 hour driving time



The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) presented the first standards as a national expression of minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of urban and rural communities, and as a means to justify the need for parks and open space within the general land-use pattern of a region or community. The NRPA standards are meant to serve only as a *guide* to planning - not as absolute criteria. According to the NRPA in 1983, the standards should "be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment relating to the particular situation to which they are applied and specific local needs." While standards should not be applied rigidly, they can be used to establish community goals or benchmarks.

#### Inventory of Parks and Recreational Facilities

An inventory of Hendricks County outdoor recreational areas was assembled in the Fall of 1993. The inventory from the 1983 Comprehensive Plan for Hendricks County was used as a baseline for the update. Town managers and clerks, school and park superintendents, township trustees, churches and private landowners were contacted by phone or person. The emphasis was placed on "function" of the recreational area rather than who provides the facility. The term "activity" is used to mean the actual hardware available at each recreational area, such as play equipment, basketball and tennis courts, etc.

An attempt was made to include all recreational facilities, including those operated by non-park agencies (i.e., a school or

church) except for apartment complexes and subdivision play lots. Both publicly- and privately- owned golf courses are included as well. State park and park reserves within an hour's drive are included, but federal recreational areas (i.e., national forests) are not.

### **Park Categories**

Parks are classified and evaluated according to categories and standards defined by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and the Indiana State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Classification of park types are as follows:

- A **mini-park** is a small park, usually under two acres in size, which generally features specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or a specific group.
- A **neighborhood park** is a walk-in park that is generally three to 20 acres in size and is an area for short-term, intensive recreational activities, such as field and court games and playground apparatus, with some passive recreational activities, such as picnicking.
- **District parks** range in size from 20 to 100 acres. These are areas of diverse environmental quality and may include areas suited for recreational activities, or they may be areas of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking or biking.
- **Regional parks** are usually 250 acres or larger and

serve several communities within an hour's drive. Regional parks are areas of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation, such as boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail using.

- **Large urban parks** are over 100 acres in size and serve populations within 1/2- hour driving time. However, there are no parks in Hendricks County that could be classified as a large urban park, and they are not discussed further in this document.
- **State parks and park reserves** are usually classified as having more than 1,000 acres and provide areas of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation, such as wildlife habitat, camping, conservation, and pleasure driving.
- **Special feature/specific sport facilities** are areas reserved for specialized or single-purpose recreational activities, such as golf, shooting ranges, or hunting or fishing conservancies.

**Schools** are sometimes classified separately as a non-park agency. Because they are used primarily by children within a small area, however, they are classified here as neighborhood parks.

**Churches** can also be classified separately and as a non-park agency. However, for the purposes of this document, churches - with the exceptions of King's Way and Avon Christian Churches - are classified as mini-parks. These best fit the descriptions of district park and neighborhood park, respectively, because of

their size and diversity of activities. Two of the three parochial schools - St. Suzanna and St. Malachy Catholic Churches - are counted as mini-parks, while Bethesda is counted as a neighborhood park due to size and diversity of activities.

### **Park Providers**

There are many different providers of parks and park activities. **Local governments** play a key role in providing recreation opportunities and natural resources on local public lands. **County governments** - through their park and recreation boards - generally provide large park and recreation areas, emphasizing natural settings and nature-oriented opportunities, such as hiking, picnicking, and boating. Counties are also uniquely suited to coordinate and develop "linear" parks, which are greenways that follow riverways, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, or other corridors that, by their nature, cross city and town corporate limits and serve people from throughout a county. County governments generally do not provide intensive recreational facilities, such as athletic field complexes and large swimming pools (Indiana SCORP, 1989).

**Municipalities** are generally responsible for providing recreational facilities to those citizens who reside within incorporated areas and are typically run by government agencies. Municipal parks provide diverse, organized, and year-round programs and are close to users. These facilities are open to

the public and are intended to serve the daily outdoor recreational needs of the community.

**Private not-for-profit organizations** can play a major role in providing outdoor recreation opportunities. This sector includes a wide range of organizations, including churches, youth and civic groups, conservation organizations, and user groups. The roles of these organizations range from directly owning and operating land and recreational facilities to offering opportunities to members through various programs.

**Private for-profit organizations** may also provide a wide range of recreational facilities, including pools and campgrounds. Another example would be the proposed theme park to be located west of Plainfield. Over the years, the role of the for-profit sector in providing recreational opportunities has focused on areas, such as golf courses, where sufficient revenue can be generated to justify financial investments.

**Private land**, including backyards, whether urban or rural, are also important places for recreation. Many people have play equipment, picnic tables, and swimming pools. Many rural landowners provide additional recreational facilities, such as fishing and hunting areas.

**Multiple use** is an efficient means of providing the public with quality outdoor recreation through existing public lands and

efficient means of developing programs and outdoor recreational facilities that can potentially benefit the entire recreating community.

### Breakdown of Park Types

In 1983 Hendricks County residents had access to 83 recreational areas. From the 1993 assessment, this number has risen to 120. There are 114 recreational areas in Hendricks County and another six within an hour's drive (Table 2).

These areas comprise 37 neighborhood parks, including Avon Christian Church and Bethesda, 26 specific sport/special feature facilities (not including golf courses), 23 mini-parks, 16 district parks, including Kingsway Christian Church, 11 golf courses, 6 state parks/park reserves, and 1 regional park. The state parks and the regional park reserve located outside the county boundaries make up about 87% of the total acreage (or approximately 27,700 acres) available to the residents of Hendricks County. The 11 golf courses within the county (three 18-hole courses and eight 9-hole courses) cover approximately 1,250 acres, and the remaining facilities cover approximately 2,900 acres. A continued growth in population will increase the demand on these recreational facilities and the need for constructing additional facilities.

The total number of park types in each township is also listed in Table 2, followed by the acreage that each park type occupies in parentheses. Approximately half of the inventory is made up of public

2,900 acres. A continued growth in population will increase the demand on these recreational facilities and the need for constructing additional facilities.

The total number of park types in each township is also listed in Table 2, followed by the acreage that each park type occupies in parentheses. Approximately half of the inventory is made up of public sector facilities (i.e., public schools, municipal, county, and state facilities), which make up 90% of the total acreage, or over 28,800 acres. Without state parks/park reserves outside the county, Hendricks County has slightly more than 1,100 acres of recreational land. The private facilities sector consists of approximately 60% civic and church non-profit areas and 40% for-profit areas and 40% for-profit areas, or about 3,100 acres. This indicates that Hendricks County relies heavily upon the private sector to provide recreational facilities.

#### **Breakdown of Providers**

The total number of facilities by type or provider, including acreage with and without golf courses, is presented in Table 3. Among the 120 recreational areas, are 39 private non-profit areas (consisting of 21 churches - three of which are parochial schools - and 18 civic areas), 27 schools, 22 private-for-profit areas, 22 municipal areas, 5 state parks (accessible within an hour's drive of Hendricks County), and 3 state recreational areas, 1 county and 1 regional park reserve (located just east of Hendricks County on the western border of Marion County).

Table 2 Park Types by Township

TOWNSHIP	MINI-PARK	NEIGH-BORHOOD	DISTRICT PARK	REGIONAL PARK	SPECIAL FEATURE	GOLF	STATE PARK/RESERVE	TOTALS
Brown	1 (2)	1 (43)				1 (60)		3 (105)
Center	8 (16)	5 (107)	7 (247)		3 (44)	2 (152)		25 (566)
Clay	2 (3)	1 (40)			3 (130)			6 (173)
Eel River	1 (1)	2 (12)	1 (40)			1 (155)		5 (208)
Franklin	2 (3)							2 (3)
Guilford	1 (3)	6 (74)	5 (179)	1 (530)	5 (110)	2 (226)		20 (1122)
Liberty		3 (85)			2 (140)	2 (250)		7 (475)
Lincoln	7 (23)	9 (136)	1 (25)		7 (531)	1 (78)		25 (795)
Marion					1 (2)			1 (2)
Middle		2 (15)			1 (3)	1 (42)		4 (60)
Union	1 (1)	2 (68)			2 (22)			5 (91)
Washington		6 (136)	2 (125)		2 (68)	1 (290)		11 (619)
Marion County							1 (4200)	(4200)
Indiana							5 (23,500)	5 (23,500)
TOTALS	23 (52)	37 (716)	16 (616)	1 (530)	26 (1050)	11 (1253)	6 (27,700)	120 (31,917)



TABLE 3 Type of Provider by Township

TOWNSHIP	PVT NON-PROFIT			PUBLIC						PRIVATE		TOTAL
	CIVIC	CHURCH	SCHOOL	MUNICIPAL	COUNTY	STATE	FOR-PROFIT	TOTAL				
Brown		2 (45)						1 (60) (0)	3 (105) (45)			
Center	5 (91)	7 (15)	5 (107)	4 (151)	1 (20)			3 (182) (30)	25 (566) (414)			
Clay	2 (126)	1 (2)	1 (40)	2 (5)					6 (173) (173)			
Eel River			1 (9)	2 (4)				2 (195) (40)	5 (208) (53)			
Franklin		1 (1)		1 (2)					2 (3) (3)			
Guilford	3 (181) (25)	3 (71)	5 (59)	3 (118)		2 (51)		4 (642) (572)	20 (1122) (896)			
Liberty	2 (140)		3 (85)					2 (250) (0)	7 (475) (225)			
Lincoln	3 (42)	5 (21)	6 (113)	6 (85)				5 (532) (454)	25 (793) (715)			
Marion	1 (2)								1 (2) (2)			
Middle			1 (8)	2 (10)				1 (42) (0)	4 (60) (18)			
Union	1 (2)	1 (1)	1 (64)	1 (4)		1 (20)			5 (91) (91)			
Washington	1 (11)	1 (20)	4 (96)	1 (73)				4 (419) (129)	11 (619) (329)			
Marion Co.					1 (4200)				1 (4200)			
Indiana									5 (23500)			
TOTALS	18 (595) (439)	21 (176)	27 (581)	22 (452)	2 (4220)	6 (23571)	22 (2322) (1225)		120 (31917) (30664)			

First number indicates total number of facilities.  
 First ( ) indicates acreage including golf courses, Second ( ) indicates acreage without golf courses.

county. This gives a measure of adequacy when all recreational facilities available to the public are considered.

- The next removes schools and churches from the total count to give planners an idea of the breakdown of park versus non-park areas. This assessment also shows the extent to which the government relies on non-park agencies to meet standards.

**TABLE 4**                      **Comparison to Standards of Park Type**

PARK TYPE	STANDARD (ACRES/75,700)	CURRENT (ACRES/75,700)	NEEDED IN 2010 (ACRES/82,700)
Mini-Parks	19 - 38 acres	52 acres * 7 acres **	21 - 42 acres
Neighborhood Parks	189 acres	736 acres* 72 **	207 acres
District Parks	189 acres	616 acres* 367 acres**	207 acres
Regional Parks	1514 acres	530 acres* 530 acres*	1654 acres

\* Includes all facilities

\*\* Excludes schools and churches

## **Park Types Conclusion**

Based on NRPA standards, Hendricks County (at its 1990 population of 75,700) needs 19 - 38 acres of mini-parks, 189 acres of neighborhood and district parks, and 1,514 acres of regional parks to satisfy current standards (Table 4). As shown in this table, Hendricks County exceeds standards for all but regional parks.

## **Assessment of Park Types by Individual Townships**

Tables 5 through 8 illustrate the status of each township regarding standards of park types. Total acreage is listed, followed by acreage recommended by the NRPA based on the population of that township.

Liberty, Marion, Middle, and Washington Townships have no mini-parks and do not meet standards (Table 5). The remaining townships, with the exception of Guilford, exceed standards when all facility providers are included. Center and Lincoln Townships are well above acreage standards, but churches account for over 90% of the total acreage. Schools account for almost 93% of neighborhood park acreage in Hendricks County (Table 6). Without these facilities, no township meets standards except Union in this category. Franklin and Marion Townships have no neighborhood parks nor schools, and thus they do not meet standards.

No district parks exist in seven of the twelve townships in Hendricks County (Table 7). Of the remaining five, all exceed standards (four to twelve times) except Lincoln, which falls short by ten acres. Further, Guilford is the only township within the county that has a regional park (Table 8).

TABLE 5, Acreage of Mini-Parks in Hendricks County

TOWNSHIP	EXISTING	REQUIRED BASED ON STANDARDS	WITHOUT CHURCHES
BROWN	2.0	1.2 - 2.4	---
CENTER	16.0	1.9 - 3.8	1.0
CLAY	3.0	0.5 - 1.0	1.0
EEL RIVER	1.0	0.4 - 0.8	1.0
FRANKLIN	3.0	0.3 - 0.6	2.0
GUILFORD	3.0	4.9 - 9.8	---
LIBERTY	---	1.2 - 2.4	---
LINCOLN	23.0	3.5 - 7.0	2.0
MARION	---	0.3 - 0.7	---
MIDDLE	---	0.9 - 1.8	---
UNION	1.0	0.4 - 0.8	---
WASHINGTON	---	3.7 - 7.4	---
COUNTY	52.0	19.2 - 38.4	7.0

TABLE 6, Acreage of Neighborhood Parks in Hendricks County

TOWNSHIP	EXISTING	REQUIRED BASED ON STANDARDS	W/O SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES
BROWN	43	11.8	---
CENTER	107	18.5	---
CLAY	40	5.0	---
EEL RIVER	12	3.8	3
FRANKLIN	---	2.8	---
GUILFORD	74	48.8	15
LIBERTY	85	11.5	---
LINCOLN	136	35	23
MARION	---	3.3	---
MIDDLE	15	8.8	7
UNION	68	4.0	4
WASHINGTON	136	36.8	20
<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>72</b>

TABLE 7, Acreage of District Parks in Hendricks County

TOWNSHIP	EXISTING	REQUIRED BASED ON STANDARDS	WITHOUT CHURCHES
BROWN	---	11.8	---
CENTER	247	18.5	151
CLAY	---	5.0	---
EEL RIVER	40	3.8	---
FRANKLIN	---	2.8	---
GUILFORD	179	48.8	118
LIBERTY	---	11.5	---
LINCOLN	25	35	25
MARION	---	3.3	---
MIDDLE	---	8.8	---
UNION	---	4.0	---
WASHINGTON	125	36.8	73
COUNTY	616	190	367

TABLE 8, Acreage of Regional Parks in Hendricks County

TOWNSHIP	EXISTING	REQUIRED BASED ON STANDARDS	W/O SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES
BROWN	---	94	---
CENTER	---	148	---
CLAY	---	40	---
EEL RIVER	---	30	---
FRANKLIN	---	22	---
GUILFORD	530	390	530
LIBERTY	---	92	---
LINCOLN	---	280	---
MARION	---	26	---
MIDDLE	---	70	---
UNION	---	32	---
WASHINGTON	---	294	---
COUNTY	530	1,518	530



### **Future Needs Based on Population Projection**

Similar assessments have been done to learn the *future* needs for parks and recreational facilities based on a projected population for the year 2010 (Indiana Business Research Center - IBRC - 1993). This projection is available only for the county in general and not by individual township, so assessments are done only for the county as a whole.

The projected increase in population - 7,000 additional residents - will not affect the need for park types in Hendricks County (Table 4). Given the number of facilities that already exist, the county will still meet standards on every category except regional parks. At 52 acres of mini-parks presently, the county will still have sufficient acreage, even if no additional parks are developed. Approximately 207 acres of neighborhood and district parks will be needed, and 1,654 acres of regional parks to meet national standards. Again, acreage from neighborhood and district parks should remain sufficient to meet standards, but regional parks will be lacking.

#### **Results:**

- Hendricks County parks and recreation areas meet the standards set by the National Recreation and Park Association in most categories of park types and activities when all providers of facilities are included.
- Schools and churches are important providers of the recreational needs for the county. However, schools and churches often have their own activities in the evenings and on weekends that can limit public use of their facilities. If these providers are removed, Hendricks County falls below standards in several categories.
- Most of the public swimming pools in the county are

inside schools. The public has little access in the winter because the schools use them and in the summer people prefer outdoor pools.

- The residents of Hendricks County are presently served by at least 120 recreational facilities. Most of the facilities are concentrated in four of the twelve townships; Center, Guilford, Lincoln, and Washington.
- Hendricks County will still be close to national parks standard even if the population increases by a projected 7,000 residents for the year 2010.

### **Survey**

#### **Where did people recreate?**

- Most people spent their recreation time near home and lived within five miles of the nearest public facilities. The average person made 2.3 trips to a Hendricks County park within the past year and preferred them to private recreation areas. Almost one in six did not use any parks.

#### **What did they like to do?**

- Overall, respondents from Hendricks County felt that parks were of good quality and an important asset to the county. Most felt that the parks compared favorably to other parks systems, were safe, and adequately maintained. The recreational activities' respondents would like more of were: outdoor swimming pools, boating/fishing areas, exercise paths, and outdoor/nature programs.

#### **Did they want a county parks board?**

- There was weak support (38%) for the establishment of a parks board but clearly more public discussion is needed to inform the public before a final decision is made.

**How would they like to pay for recreation?**

- The county would have little support in raising new money through taxes. Two questions asked about ways to finance parks and user fees accounted for about 50% of the responses. The county will need to look at other means of financing before raising taxes to fund recreation.

**Did they support a rails to trails project?**

- People were asked about the proposed B&O rail line becoming a trail over 50% approved of the idea and less than 20% were opposed. The rest were not sure. When asked if they would use if fewer people said they would. Some residents, therefore, must see some benefit even if they do not use it themselves. Looking at the answers by township even those far away favored the proposal. Younger people and those with higher income were more in favor of the trail.

**Who answered the survey?**

- Six hundred and seventy-seven (677) people completed the survey for a 69% response rate. The people who responded were representative of the county using 1990 Census data.

III. RAILS TO TRAILS

## HENDRICKS COUNTY RAILS-TO-TRAILS

Can you imagine hiking 62 miles of a peaceful, tree-lined "linear park" from county to county? Or jogging auto-free greenways edged with wildflowers? Bicycling and horseback riding over historic pathways connecting little settlements?

The proposed rails-to-trails project is located on the abandoned B&O rail corridor running from Speedway, in Marion County west through Hendricks, Putnam, Parke and Vermillion counties to the Illinois border. The main obstacle inhibiting the development of trails in Indiana is lack of legislative support promoting trail development. Rail corridor development is strongly recommended by the federal government and has been adopted in many states. So far, Indiana has not passed legislation or given a state agency the authority to aggressively pursue corridor preservation and development. Indiana is behind most states in completed rails-to-trails projects. Without the support of a federal or state law, trail developers must purchase individual parcels from adjacent land owners. This makes most projects economically unfeasible. There is a statute, "The Doctrine of Shifting Public Use of Easements", that may allow trail planners to legally transfer railroad easements to a trail group for use as a recreation corridor.

Other situations exist that facilitate trail development. One of these is the ownership of the land by a government entity. The National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy ranks this as the most desirable ownership situation in order to develop a trail. The offer by Hendricks County to purchase the corridor is a step in

the right direction for increasing Hendricks County's opportunities for corridor development. It is believed that 60% of the land is held by easements.

Trail development would bring numerous recreational benefits to Hendricks County and improve recreation standards for the western townships. Trail development depends on the resolution of property disputes and the county commissioners choosing trail development over other development choices.

On August 7, 1995, the B&O trail was endorsed by the Hendricks County Commissioners. Hendricks County has agreed to act as the lead agent for the use of federal grant money. This endorsement will allow Rail Corridor Development Inc. to request grant money under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act to purchase a 25 mile length of the corridor in Marion and Hendricks counties and develop a three to eight mile segment of the trail for demonstration purposes. The B&O trail has received approval from the Midwest region of the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA). This program is designed to help citizens conserve rivers and develop trails on lands outside of our national parks. Although RTCA does not provide direct funding for trail projects, they will provide assistance in a variety of areas including coalition building, public information workshops, generation community leadership, and fund raising.

A linear park is a long, narrow park with limited access that is ideal for activities such as bicycling, hiking, nature study, jogging, horseback riding and cross-country skiing. The

conversion of abandoned railroad right-of-ways into linear parks is one of the most exciting recreational developments of the century. Over 500 such parks are already in operation across the country. It is the most efficient use of land per acre for recreation and it preserves the corridor in one piece.

The benefits of rail trails are a traffic-free, level path for family recreation that is close to home; an unparalleled route for walking, jogging, and biking; a level, quiet area for the disabled, children and seniors to enjoy nature; an ideal place for horseback riding and cross-country skiing; a habitat for wildflowers, birds and wildlife; and an economic boost to the area due to the trail-related business. The economic benefits include increase business, sales increase, property value increases and a health and fitness facility close to employers.

IV. FRIENDSHIP GARDENS



## Friendship Gardens Report

A new park is under development in Plainfield known as Friendship Gardens. This name selection originated from a survey of the community.

Friendship Gardens is on a piece of property - approximately 13 acres - that the State of Indiana donated to the Town of Plainfield several years ago. The park is located on the west side of South Center Street on a straight line between Plainfield High School and Indiana Boys School.

Plainfield Plus, a community organization devoted to improving the quality of life in the Plainfield area, developed the idea of converting this land into a quiet park to compliment the other high activity parks in the area. Now, thru a partnership with the Plainfield Town Council, Plainfield Plus is spearheading the development of this park along with many other organizations and businesses who are supporting this effort with offers of funding and/or services.

Plans call for the park to include a fountain, family garden plots, flower gardens, a picnic area, walking paths, a large gazebo, at least one specimen each of the 50 trees native to

Indiana, and a brick walk. The brick walk will be made up of bricks purchased by individuals as memorials, etc. Already constructed in the park is a monument recognizing the many veterans in our area. This monument was constructed this past Summer in recognition of 50 years since World War II.

Friendship Gardens is in an ideal location to compliment the extensive walking paths that are a part of Hummel and Swinford Parks. The Plainfield Town Street Department has already extended a path to within approximately 80 yards of Friendship Gardens and has plans to complete the connection as the park is developed.

For many years there have been road signs at our county lines announcing Hendricks County as "The Garden Spot". Our hope and dream is that Friendship Gardens will become the centerpiece for this recognition.

V. CONCLUSION

As Hendricks County continues to grow, so does the need for new parks to be developed. A current plan in Hendricks County is the construction of a Theme Park in south west Hendricks Co..

At the current time Hendricks County does not have a County Park Board. This type of board could work to develop a county parks and recreational master plan, which could rank future projects and receive Federal Grant money. A county wide plan would help balance the availability of recreational facilities and better developed park systems. Maybe we can even find a beach somewhere in Hendricks Counties future!

Hendricks County parks and recreation areas meet the standards set by the National Recreation and Park Association. Schools and churches are an important provider of recreational needs for the county. Hendricks County will still be close to National Parks Standards even if the population increases by a projected 7,000 residents for the year 2010.

As part of our project, we planted 2 Redbud trees in Friendship Park in Plainfield to help enhance the parks further development. We would like to thank Cox's Plant Farm and Marathon Oil for the donation of the trees and Sarah Lingwall for her part in the acquisition of the them.