

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**LaGrange
County
Parks**

and recreation

Front photo: Delt Church Park set for Trail of Lights

"To develop and maintain a system of parks that preserves open space and natural areas, and offers outdoor recreation opportunities to the public."

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 Wolcottville, IN 46795
 260-854-2225
parks@lagrangeparks.org
www.lagrangeparks.org

Parks & Places

Cedar Lake Beach	David Rogers Park
Cedar Lake Fen	Delt Church Park
Dallas Lake Park	Duff Memorial Park
Wall Lake Beach	Shipshewana Lake Park
LaGrange Nature Preserve / Maple Wood	
Pine Knob Park & Mike Metz Fen	

Park Staff

Mary Franke, Director
 George DeWald, Superintendent
 Daniel Schelinski, Events Planner/Nature Interpreter
 Chris Sluyter, Maintenance Technician
 Eric Jordan, Maintenance Technician
 Jacob Weimer, Maintenance Technician
 Emily Wolfe, Administrative Assistant/Communication Specialist
 Randy Merrifield, Park Ranger
 Tim Cleveland, Assistant Park Ranger
 Seasonal/Temporary Staff - 8 Summer and 1 Fall/Winter

Park Board

John Egli, President
 Eric Maginn, Vice President
 Ardala Hepler, Secretary (until April)
 Julia Wolheter, Member
 Paul Baker, Member
 Perry Miller, Member
 Michael Holcomb, (began in May)

County Council

Jeff Campos
 Ryan Riegsecker
 Harold Gingerich
 Jim Young
 Jeff Brill
 Steve McKowan
 Mike Strawser

Commissioners

Terry Martin	Peter Cook	Kevin Myers
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Year in Review

We are honored to share our year with you. We are grateful for the continued support and cooperation from our county leadership, area partnerships, and our incredible local communities. Our combined efforts have given us, and offered those who visit, a park system that is truly enjoyed. Thank you!

Mary Franke, Park Director

NUMBERS TO SHARE



3006

Maple syrup suckers made and sold at Maple Syrup Days.

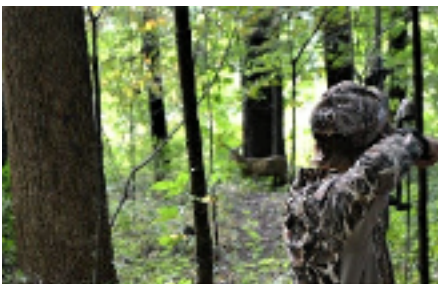
924

Bottles of maple syrup sold.
388 pints and 536 quarts
Plus all the glass bottles and flights!



862

Bags of maple cotton candy made and sold at Maple Syrup Days



236

Facility reservations. The Greenwood Pavilion led with 63 reservations, South River Pavilion with 58 and Pine Knob Clubhouse had 36.

1821

At least this many archers enjoyed the 3-D archery target trail at Pine Knob Park - 16.5% more than 2023.



1235

According to UDisc, at least this many enjoyed playing disc golf. Over 2000 miles walked. September 8 was the busiest with over 25 rounds played.



10,874

At least this many people attended organized park events and programs this year.

38,000

At least this many Facebook accounts viewed posts about our park trail maps.

BEST IN INDIANA



Midwestern Traveler offered an opportunity for the public to submit and vote for their favorite places in Indiana. Somehow, Dallas Lake Park was nominated to run for "Best Park", and WON! We are grateful for the one who nominated us and for all who voted for us. Thank you!



Dallas Lake Park Won!

2024 MAIN ST UNITED'S
Best in
INDIANA

The Inaugural Best in Indiana is a celebration and competition among the top establishments within the Hoosier State and recognize the top businesses in each category from food & drink, retail, service organizations and travel throughout the state, presented by Main Street United and Midwestern Traveler Magazine. Readers voted for their favorites in 162 categories and the winners are listed in the following pages. Check out who and what won and whether your favorites made the cut.

BY THE EDITORS

INDIANA

2024 MAIN ST UNITED'S
Best in
INDIANA

LaGrange County Parks and recreation

CONGRATULATIONS!

On behalf of the **Midwestern Traveler Magazine**, we would like to congratulate, **Dallas Lake Park** as you have been named the winner of the **2024 Best in Indiana** for the **Inaugural Awards** in the following category(ies): **Park**

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Delt Church Park

Improvements continued on the Disc Golf Course at Delt Church Park this spring. The final course improvement included upgraded, tournament worthy, goal baskets and updated course signage. There was also a fun addition in the fall. We re-purposed some of the older goal baskets and created a Tic-Tac-Toe opportunity in the corner.

A new concrete entry drive was installed and the deck at the South River Pavilion was replaced with new railing. Playground equipment was replaced as needed.



Dallas Lake Park

Lodge - New windows, added insulation, exterior trim replacement, new gas fireplace insert, new hanging lights and ceiling fan, refrigerator and microwave replacement, new bathroom flooring.

Office - new metal roof and windows

Maintenance Building - new metal roof

Driveway - new asphalt top



David Rogers Memorial Park

Re-purposed the remaining shelter concrete pad for a casual pickleball court.

Planted annual flowers and cleared an area for planting prairie flowers.

Replaced some cabin windows.



Barn Quilts

Our five larger parks have joined the Barn Quilt tour.

Maple Wood Nature Center: "Tree of Life"

Delt Church Park: "Amish Buggy Star"

David Rogers Park: "Start in the Cabin"

Pine Knob Park: "Bucks N Bulleyes"

Dallas Lake Park: "Beach Sunrise"



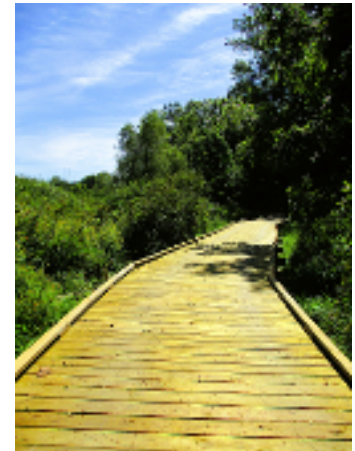
PARK TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Trails at Dallas Lake Park

Twelve children's activity signs were added to the Fitness Trail at Dallas Lake Park.

Funding for signs provided by Parkview LaGrange Hospital. Parkview Health is finding ways to encourage all age groups to enjoy outdoor activities.

We also replaced the south boardwalk along Pond Lil. The surface sits a bit higher which helps offer a better view of the water.



Trails at Maple Wood

A community partnership with Parkview LaGrange and Bowen Health introduced Mindfulness Trail activity signs along the accessible trail portion at Maple Wood.

Funding provided by Parkview LaGrange Hospital. Signs created through collaboration.

Answering a community need for mental well-being and physical health, this walking mindfulness trail shares eight activities.

Signs were installed for a grand opening held on October 5.



Trails at Pine Knob

The boardwalk deck on the north side of Meter Lake was replaced with Azek material.

The short boardwalk on the south portion of the trails was replaced.

Resurfaced most of old limestone trails.

Mountain Bike Trail

Park Board Member, Paul Baker, led the creation of a mountain bike trail at Duff Memorial Park.

The mown one-way loop trail is approximately 1.25 miles long.

The grand opening was held on May 19. Additional improvements are being considered based on funding and management needs.



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Trail of Lights

The Parks Dept. offered a Trail of Lights at Delt Church Park for the first time. The Trail of Lights was open Friday and Saturday for the 2 weekends before Christmas, from 5:30 - 8:30 pm each night.

Fundraising for this new concept began at the end of October, giving us a short time span to finish planning and installing what we could for the inaugural year of this event.

The experience began at the park entrance as visitors drove through a series of lit arches. The drive continued around the loop to view inflatables, lit wire forms, and lit cutouts until arriving at the parking area. The walking trail began under the leaping reindeer arch, crossed the bridge, with lights and displays illuminating approx .66 mile of a walking trail loop. The Greenwood Pavilion was open with the fireplace roaring to create a cozy warming spot to connect with others in the community. Fawn River Coffee provided coffee, cocoa, and cider. Volunteers were an essential part for this event! Santa was present the last weekend to collect donations.



Not So Spooky Trail

The Parks Dept staff and The Friends of LaGrange Parks put on another successful free family event. Attendance was nearly 485, a 38% increase over last year. Children absolutely enjoyed the evening of face painting, horse-drawn wagon rides through the "not so spooky" woods, roasting marshmallows and hot dogs, drinking maple steamers, playing games, and doing crafts.

Event Sponsors:

Lake City Bank & Bowen Health



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Maple Syrup Days

Maple Syrup Field Trips: 972 students, at least 260 traveled from outside LaGrange County.

The Friends of LaGrange County Parks hosted the annual Sap Run/Syrup Stroll: 50 participants.

The Friends of LaGrange County Parks assisted in all areas of Maple Syrup Days. The South Milford Lions prepared the pancake and sausage breakfast. The Dekalb County Horsemen's Association shared horse-drawn wagon rides through the sugar bush. LaGrange County Tri-Kappa made maple cotton candy for the 2-day event. and Roz Puppets provided puppet show entertainment. Volunteers and interpreters assisted in all areas.

3002+ people attended the event. The second largest pancake meal attendance in Maple Syrup Days history.

Event Sponsors: LaGrange REMC and LaGrange County Convention Visitor's Bureau.

Maple syrup & syrup treats sold out! This year's special syrup specialty was a syrup flight.

- Trees tapped: 470
- 5725 gallons of sap collected
- 75 gallons of syrup made
- First drops collected on February 5



LaGrange County Connecting Youth

In cooperation with LCYC (LaGrange Communities Youth Centers), this is the third year for this event. Due to extreme heat, this event was rescheduled from June at Delt Church Park to September at Dallas Lake Park.

This event was considered a success with an estimated 400 in total attendance including 170 youth. We gave away 146 backpacks before running out. We were also fortunate to have enough door prizes for all raffle ticket holders.



5K FUN RUNS & WALKS

Turkey Trot 5K Fun Run & Walk

The first year for the Turkey Trot held at Delt Church Park on Thanksgiving morning. We had 41 participants our first year.

Age group winner prizes included bird feeders, birdhouses, and chocolate.



FeNGke 5K Fun Run & Walk

This 5K Fun Run & Walk had 14 participants this year with a total event attendance of 23. The Friends of LaGrange County Parks were present to help check-in participants and serve after race refreshments.

Six prizes were locally crafted mugs from Riverwood Pottery customized with the "FeNGke" logo. The youth prizes were fun gift cards and candy. Swag bags included an event T-shirt and fun treats.

Event Sponsors : Billman Propane and Schlemmer Hardware

SUMMERTIME FUN

Summer Day Camp

By Gone Days, Nature Bound, & Adventure Bound offered 5 weeks of summer day camp this year.

Grant funds received from JDAI resources allowed us to offer free summer camp this year, purchase needed supplies, pay for camp activities, and provide Friday lunch.

111 children attended camp.



LaGrange County Parks and Recreation Summer 2024

By Gone Days June 10-14
 5 weeks of fun-filled activities, games, and crafts. Open to ages 5-12. Fee: \$50.00.

Adventure Bound June 17-21
 Adventure Bound is a 5-day camp for ages 5-12. Activities include hiking, fishing, and more. Fee: \$50.00.

Nature Bound June 24-28, July 5-9, & July 16-20
 Nature Bound is a 5-week camp for ages 5-12. Activities include nature walks, art, and more. Fee: \$50.00.

Call the Park Office to register: 200-854-3225



Swim Lessons

Swim lessons were offered this year. Eight 2-week sessions were offered. Spots quickly filled for 46 students. Fee: \$50 ea.

Two certified lifeguards with swim instructor training led lessons.

LaGrange County Parks and Recreation Summer 2024

Swim Lessons

Swim lessons are held at Delta Lake Park, 1000 Delta Lake Park, Whitesboro, NY 14790. Ages 5-12. Fee: \$50.00.

SESSION 1	SESSION 2
Class 1: 10:00 - 11:00 am Class 2: 11:00 - 12:00 pm Class 3: 1:00 - 2:00 pm Class 4: 2:00 - 4:00 pm	Class 1: 10:00 - 11:00 am Class 2: 11:00 - 12:00 pm Class 3: 1:00 - 2:00 pm Class 4: 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Call the Park Office to register: 200-854-3225
 Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8 am-12:00 & 12:30-3:30 pm
 LaGrange County Parks & Recreation, 1000 Delta Lake Park, Whitesboro, NY 14790

PROGRAMS/EVENTS REPORT

Programs & Special Events

Programs in our Parks

Programs: A program offered in our parks by others and/or a program presented by the Nature Interpreter in one of our county parks.

Public programs may include recurring gatherings at a park such as Quilt Class, Breakfast with the Birds, and nature walks/hikes. Seasonal public programs may include Hunter's Ed or holiday programs.

School programs include number of students who visit one of our parks for an educational field trip. Maple Syrup field trips are included.



Visiting Programs

Visiting programs are programs presented by the Nature Interpreter at a different location.

The Nature Interpreter travels to schools to share educational programs. Many visits are established and repeat monthly, while others may be by special request. When the Nature Interpreter visits a school, he may travel to several classrooms repeating the same program several times -- this is counted as one program.

Visiting programs also include attending community gatherings to share information about our county parks, or attending organization meetings to offer requested presentations.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Events

An event that has an extended schedule beyond a traditional naturalist program. A special event many have food, activities, stations, presentations, or a specific purpose. These events require additional staff and/or volunteers, as well as a larger budget. For some special events, it is difficult to record an exact number of patrons, so a "best guess" must suffice. The Events Planner prefers to be conservative when estimating.



**8 Special Events
7073 Attended**

- Sap Run & Syrup Stroll
- Maple Syrup Days
- FenNGke 5K
- Art in the Park
- Youth Event
- Not so Spooky Trail
- Turkey Trot
- Trail of Lights



PROGRAM/EVENT SUMMARY

Note:

There were less programs and events during June & July as the Nature Interpreter/Events Planner led our summer day camps.

Special Events enjoyed a boost in numbers resulting from a great first year for Trail of Lights.

The chart below compares overall numbers for the past five years.

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Special Events	7073	3584	3234	646	45
Programs in the Parks	1927	1787	1793	1716	1588
Visiting Programs	1874	2108	3218	2971	1351
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	10,874	7479	8245	5333	2984

2020 & 2021 - Maple Syrup Days was canceled and other events were impacted due to health guidelines.

2022 & 2023 - Maple Syrup Days returns and program numbers and attendance grow.

November 2023 - present - Daniel Schelinski, Nature Interpreter/Events Planner

PARK NATURE STUDY

Avian Survey of Mike Metz Fen at Pine Knob Park

Mike Metz Fen was chosen for an avian survey in 2024. Funds received from the Indiana Academy of Science paid for survey expenses conducted by area Naturalist, Fred Wooley. Sixteen visits, from April through November, offered the opportunity to record 75 species of birds, identified by sight and sound, through the migrating and breeding seasons. The full report is found on the park website.

An uncommon bird for northern Indiana is the Blue Grosbeak, posing below. Mr. Wooley identified its presence on 2 different occasions indicating the possibility of nesting activity in the area. The Sedge Wren is also not common in our area and was observed on three visits as seemingly making a home in the fen.



Photo: Blue Grosbeak, Mike Metz Fen, by Fred Wooley



PUBLICATIONS



Thirteen Lines: a quarterly newsletter created by the Park Nature Interpreter/Events Planner. Currently, 336 are emailed and 232 are mailed.

Mini-Lines: a 1/3 page insert sharing upcoming events & programs. It is added to anything mailed. (Reservations, receipts, registrations, etc.)

Email: one email, created by the Park Administrative Assistant, is sent monthly to share upcoming park programs, events, and news.

The Lonely Satyr: an electronic butterfly newsletter, created for LaGrange County Parks, by former Park Naturalist Leslie Arnold.

FINANCIAL PAGE

2024 Annual Budget

	Budget	Balance
General Fund		
Personnel	599,323.40	9,749.35
Supplies	78,725.00	1,123.16
Other Services	57,752.00	1,254.53
Capital Outlays	2,000.00	773.24
1219 Total	737,800.40	12,900.28
Non-Reverting		
Summer	25,179.36	19,523.86
Supplies	25,250.00	12,976.09
Other Services	26,710.00	8,305.61
Capital Outlays	16,000.00	65,771.72
1179 Total	93,139.36	106,397.28
Summer Camp		
Recreation	8,848.44	5,356.49
Supplies	300.00	3,123.72
Other Services	1,060.00	1060.00
4906 Total	10,208.44	9,540.21
TOTALS:	841,148.20	128,837.77

Budget Notes

Non-reverting capital outlays:
Received funds to go towards a property purchase to be final in 2025.

JDAI grant funds were received to cover registration fees, supplies, and activity expenses for summer camp this year.

LCYC grant funds were received for Wilderness Bound Camp supplies, balance will be spent in 2025.

2024 Revenue

	2024	2023
Archery Trail	9,108.26	7,825.74
Dallas Lake Admissions	1,091.48	7,909.30
Summer Day Camp Fees		4,325.00
Maple Wood Sales	28,454.80	23,816.50
Program Fees	8,022.00	7,850.00
Reservations	41,172.00	31,014.00
Total Earned Revenue	87,848.54	82,740.54
Donations	47,767.15	16,653.30
Grants	28,100.00	31,141.00
Total Revenue	163,715.69	130,534.84

Revenue Notes

Archery trail collections increased by over 16%. This is our only resource to purchase new targets.

Maple Wood Nature Center receipts increased 19% over last year.

Dallas Lake Admissions fell due to eliminating the park entry fee. Lodge and Sweetgum rentals did visibly increase by nearly 50% to help make up lost income from gate fees.

Reservation collections increased over 30% from last year. The Greenwood Pavilion at Delt Church Park leads usage with 63 days rented.

Park Truck

Our fleet lost a vehicle due to deer damage. A new truck was purchased for the Parks Department as a replacement.



GRANTS & GIFTS

\$ 300

Parkview LaGrange Hospital

Funded signage and installation materials for the Mindfulness Trail

\$ 800

Indiana Academy of Science Grant

Avian Survey in the Mike Metz Fen. Conducted by Fred Wooley.

\$ 2,000

REMC Roundup Grant

Funded horse-drawn wagon rides for Maple Syrup Days

\$ 2,500

LaGrange County Convention Visitor's Bureau Grant

Funded puppet shows, interpreter fees for horse-drawn wagons, and maple syrup demonstrations for Maple Syrup Days.

\$ 2,500

LaGrange County Community Foundation Grant

Wilderness Bound Camp set-up supplies

\$ 20,000

Olive B. Cole Foundation Grant

Funds towards purchase of a parcel to expand Pine Knob Park

\$ 28,800

Sponsorship donations received for Trail of Lights.

\$ 5,493

Donations received from those who enjoyed visiting Trail of Lights.

\$ 13,474

Donations are received throughout the year from private donors.
Maple Syrup Days related donations: \$4,010
Memorial/Memorial Bench donations \$1,637
Not So Spooky donations \$1,438
Plus undesignated gifts of donation.

Total gifted funds received: \$ 75,867

TRAIL OF LIGHT SPONSORS

George Bailey Sponsors

- ▶ Barnyard Marketing
- ▶ County Line Engine
- ▶ Dalam Welding
- ▶ Fawn River Coffee Co.
- ▶ Freedom Finish Works
- ▶ Fritz & Tina Helmuth
- ▶ LaGrange Visitors Bureau
- ▶ Tiffany's Family Restaurant

Sponsors - Time &/or Supplies

- ▶ Dave's Landscaping
- ▶ Friends of LaGrange County Parks



Kris Kringle Sponsors

- ▶ American Elegance Homes
- ▶ Clayton Middlebury
- ▶ Clearview Plastics & Glass
- ▶ Community Chiropractic
- ▶ Dallas Lake Construction
- ▶ Eberhard, Weimer & Glick
- ▶ Empire Electrical & Heating
- ▶ Fry, Trowbridge & Assoc, PC
- ▶ Jo Jo's Pretzels
- ▶ Lakeland Title Company
- ▶ PowerSafe Automation
- ▶ River Woodworking LLC
- ▶ Rock Run Industries
- ▶ Rofkahr & Culler Real Estate
- ▶ Schlemmer Hardware
- ▶ Townline Furniture
- ▶ Vino of Indiana LLC

Rudolph Sponsors

- ▶ Alliance Truck Group LLC
- ▶ Backcountry Outdoors LLC
- ▶ BAN Transit LLC
- ▶ Beers Mallers Backs & Salin
- ▶ Big C Lumber
- ▶ Billman Propane
- ▶ Eastside Harness
- ▶ Emma Warehouse
- ▶ JAG Mobile Solutions
- ▶ Kendallville Shephards Auto
- ▶ Loki's Treasure Box
- ▶ Noble County Disposal
- ▶ Schrock's Marine
- ▶ Sylvan Shores Diner
- ▶ Topeka Do IT Best Hardware
- ▶ Topeka New Holland
- ▶ Topeka Seed & Stove

Elf Sponsors

- ▶ Coody Brown's Restaurant
- ▶ Cut Here Garage
- ▶ John & JoAnn Fichtner
- ▶ Foltz Bakery
- ▶ Horizon Bank
- ▶ Hostetler Tire
- ▶ In Memory of John Arborgast
- ▶ In Memory of Rhonda O'Brian
- ▶ Howe Restaurant
- ▶ Kelly's Salvage & Pro Hdwr
- ▶ Larry & Lorie Myers
- ▶ Lorena Templin
- ▶ Michiana Builders
- ▶ Radiant Salon
- ▶ Snax in Pax Inc
- ▶ Stickley Ace Hardware
- ▶ Topeka INterra Credit Union

Cindy Lou Sponsors

- ▶ Big C Lumber - Shipshewana
- ▶ Bob & Deb Schlemmer
- ▶ Curtis Wrecking
- ▶ LaGrange Marathon
- ▶ Richard Muntz

Plus so many who choose to remain anonymous!

PARTNERSHIPS

These valuable partnerships, along with many others, provide funds, time, and manpower that make many park improvements and events possible. We are grateful for each and every one, and aspire to continue working with so many of our valued partners.

Friends of LaGrange County Parks
 Lagrange County Community Foundation
 LaGrange County Soil & Water Conservation District
 LaGrange County Convention Visitors Bureau
 LaGrange County Library
 Indiana Department of Natural Resources
 Dekalb County Horseman
 LaGrange County Leadership
 LaGrange Communities Youth Centers
 Indiana Fish and Wildlife
 LaGrange County Highway Dept.

LaGrange County Highway Dept.
 Parkview LaGrange Hospital
 Blue Heron Ministries
 Land and Water Conservation Fund
 South Milford Lions Club
 Olive B Cole Foundation
 LaGrange Tri-Kappa
 LaGrange REMC
 JDAI - LaGrange County
 Acres Land Trust
 Volunteers

SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

Prairie Heights Community School Corporation
 Westview School Corporation
 Lakeland School Corporation
 Angola School Corporation
 Metropolitan School District of Steuben County
 Middlebury Schools

Parochial Schools
 Preschools
 Home School Cooperatives from: Allen County, LaGrange County, Steuben County, Noble County, Whitley County, and Sturgis, Michigan

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

DALLAS LAKE PARK 4.6 ★

"I love going on walks here, great trail" "Beautiful trail."
"My kids love it. Not deep at all! Plenty of people to visit with."
" Always a good time at the lake!"

DAVID ROGERS PARK 4.9 ★

"Beautiful place." "Plenty of space for picnics and get-togethers."
"Such a sweet and peaceful place."

DELT CHURCH PARK 4.8 ★

"Great park!!! Wide open space & the kids like the playground."
"Absolutely worth the drive! Beautiful, open, fun park!"
"Such a relaxing park. Nice walking trail and disc golf."
"I highly recommend it for a day out" **"CLASSY"**
"Perfect place for a dog walk" "It's a great place."



MAPLE WOOD PARK 4.8 ★

"Excellent place for a hike."
"The pancake breakfast is something I will look forward to every year."
"Love this place. Great events and beautiful location."
"A beautiful sanctuary that showcases the natural splendor of the region."
"Easy hiking and lots of scenery."



PINE KNOB PARK 4.8 ★

"Everything was situated just perfect."
"Beautiful hiking trails, good shore fishing"
"Archery trail is awesome."
"This place is absolutely beautiful & quite large."
"One of my favorite places to walk and get lost in nature."
"One of the many beautiful assets provided by LaGrange County Department of Parks & Recreation" **"WHAT A WILD PLACE!"**
"It embodies the charm of Indiana's natural beauty and is well worth a visit." **"THE PARK IS GREAT!"**

WALL LAKE BEACH 4.3 ★

"Very nice lake...quiet and peaceful"

Social Numbers...

The posts that receive the most response share information about all of our trails.



Followers increased 19% to 3446

Top three Facebook posts : trails!

Highest Facebook Post:
Sharing all park trail maps
Reached 38,133 accounts.

2nd Facebook post:
10 miles of trails - all park maps
Reached 23,767 accounts.

3rd Facebook post:
Replaced boardwalk at Pine Knob
Reached 22,464 accounts.



Followers increased 22% to 297

Email Platform

One full year of sending a monthly email newsletter created by the Administrative Assistant.

The year began with 181 subscribers and ended with 340, an 87.8% increase!

Results from a year end survey:

- 100% - the email is not too long
- 30% - want more than one email

Top two categories voted to see more information about:

1. Programs & Events
2. Trail & Amenity Information.



In memory of Ardala Hepler

Ardala Hepler was a dedicated Park Board member, serving as the Board Secretary for 32 years. (1992-2024)

The Park Board and Park staff members have purchased and placed a memorial park bench in her honor.

SUMMARY & CONSIDERATIONS

The County Parks Department manages 712 acres. This includes nearly 400 acres of natural areas, 27 buildings, 3 playgrounds, 3 public beaches, and over 10 miles of trails and boardwalks.

2024 Summary

- REMC broadband installed at Park Office, Maple Wood Nature Center, and Pine Knob Clubhouse
- Completing the renovation of the Delt Church Park's Disc Golf has increased usage.
- Completed upgrades to facilities at Dallas Lake Park and Delt Church Park.
- Introduced two new public events.
- Trail improvements
- Building improvements



2025 Considerations

Dallas

- Install new well at lodge
- Start replacing long boardwalk by the road
- Clear a hill to use as a sledding hill
- Replace water fountains

David Rogers

- Plant prairie flowers on Southwest corner with a walking trail
- Building maintenance as needed

Delt Church

- Resurface limestone trail
- Create ADA trail along woods for Trail of Lights loop
- Install electric lines for Trail of Lights
- Playground equipment repairs as needed

Duff Memorial Park

- Improve bike trail
- Remove dead trees

Maple Wood

- Continue Nature Center building siding installation
- Create more ADA parking on the road loop

Pine Knob

- Add shade sail stations in fen
- Complete limestone resurfacing on trails
- Complete property acquisition and put in new trails
- Improve vault toilet buildings
- Install new ADA water fountains

Overall

- Increase attendance in parks
- Continue invasive vegetation control efforts on all park properties

