



TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN 2017 – 2021



PREPARED BY

**Tuscola County Parks and
Recreation Commission**

With Assistance From

**Tuscola County Economic
Development Corporation**



Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Planning Partners

Tuscola County Board of Commissioners

District 1 – Tom Young

District 2 – Thomas Bardwell

District 3 – Christine Trisch

District 4 – Craig Kirkpatrick

District 5 – Matthew Bierlein

Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission

Robert McKay – President

Julie Matusak – Tuscola County Road Commission Liaison

David Barrios

Steve Erickson

Jerry Peterson

Tom Young – Tuscola County Board of Commissioners Liaison

Bob Mantey – Tuscola County Drain Commission Liaison

Cynthia Kapa – Tuscola County Planning Commission Liaison

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Our Vision

The Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission with assistance from the Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation has developed this updated park and recreation master plan to serve as a guideline to improve park and recreation facilities and to develop new park and recreation opportunities in Tuscola County. This plan replaces the previous plan, “Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Plan 2007 – 2012.” It is meant as a guideline for future growth, development, and operation. In addition the master plan is intended to be updated and amended periodically in order to best reflect the goals, desires, and needs of Tuscola County residents and visitors.

While every effort has been made to adhere to the Michigan Department of Natural Resource (DNR) recommendations of a community recreation and green way plan it is our vision to incorporate a main focus of this park and recreation master plan to align with the objective of creating and sustaining highly sought after Tuscola County public spaces which incorporate the wants and needs of our communities and hit on four aspects – providing social, quality of life, environmental, and economic benefits.

Community Description

Tuscola County is located in the Southwestern portion of the Greater Thumb Region of Michigan. The neighboring counties are Huron County to the North, Sanilac County to the East, Lapeer, and Genesee Counties to the South, and Bay and Saginaw Counties to the West.

Tuscola is comprised of the following –

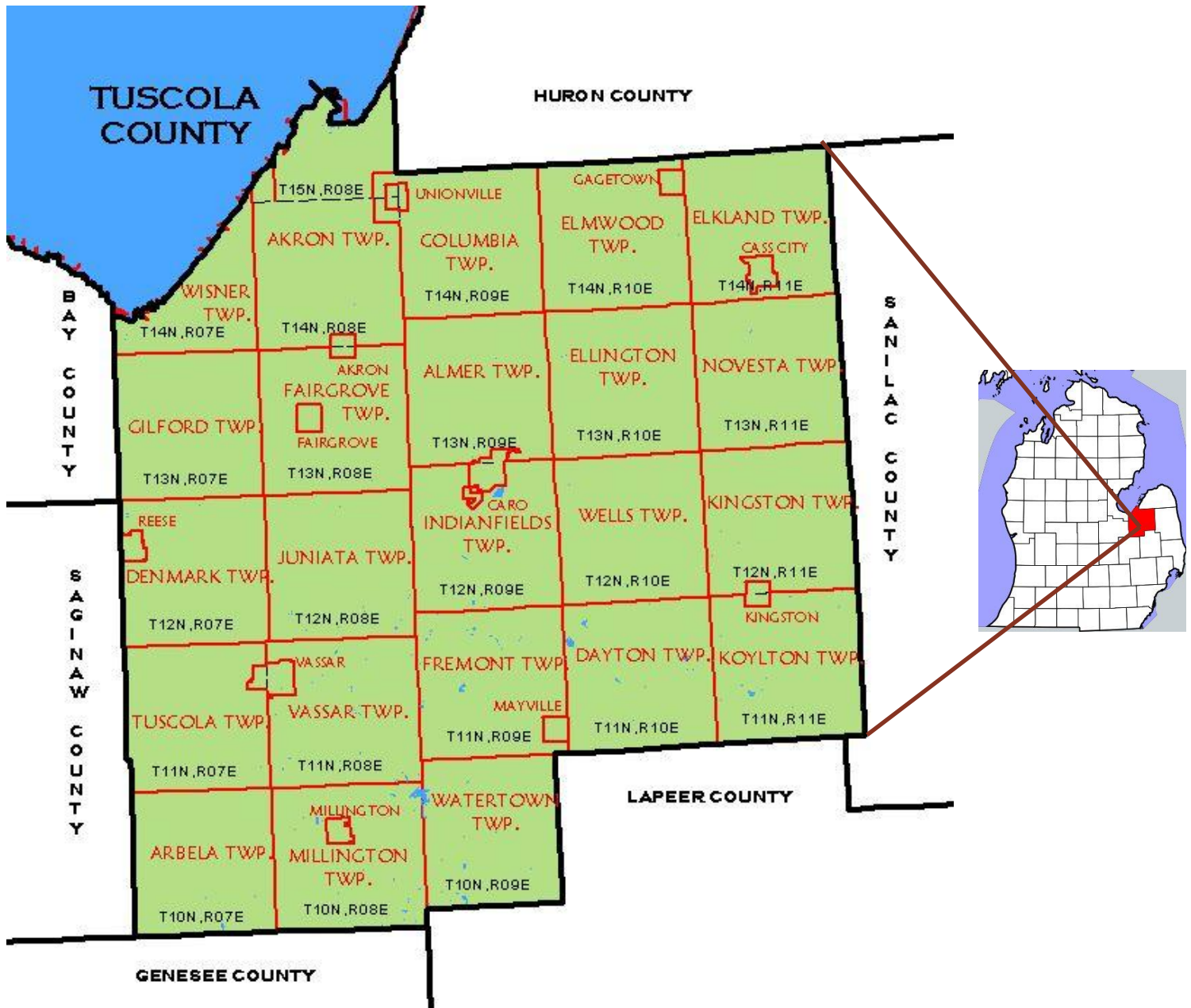
- The Cities of Caro and Vassar
- The Villages of Akron, Cass City, Fairgrove, Gagetown, Kingston, Mayville, Millington, Reese, and Unionville
- The Unincorporated areas of Bay Park, Bradleyville, Colling, Colwood, Dayton, Deford, Denmark Junction, East Dayton, and Ellington
- The Communities of Elmwood, Fostoria, Gilford, Juniata, Karrs Corner, Oakhurst, Quanicassee, Richville, Silverwood, Thomas, Tuscola, Wahjamega, Watrousville, Wisner, and Wilmot
- The Charter Township of Almer
- The Townships of Akron, Arbela, Columbia, Dayton, Denmark, Elkland, Ellington, Elmwood, Fairgrove, Fremont, Gilford, Indianfields, Juniata, Kingston, Koylton, Millington, Novesta, Tuscola, Vassar, Watertown, Wells, and Wisner

The major roads of Tuscola County are M-15, M-24, M-25, M-46, M-81, and M-138. Detroit, Flint, Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland are within a short driving distance.

Parks and natural areas have an intrinsic fundamental impact on the character and quality of life in Tuscola County. Residents have long been concerned about maintaining the quality of their community, particularly the quality of residential life, the rich and diverse natural environment, and the quality of schools and other public services.

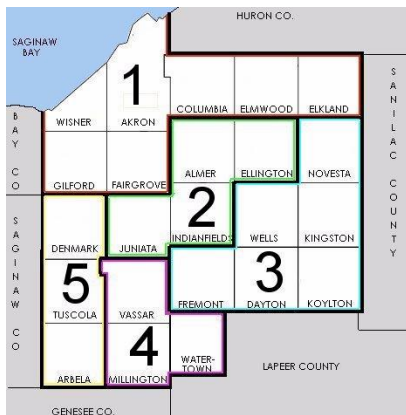
While the County of Tuscola avidly supports the parks and recreational offerings throughout Tuscola County Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is currently the only County of Tuscola owned park. It is located along the Saginaw Bay area in the Northwestern portion of Tuscola County in the Township of Wisner. Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is in close proximity to Bay County and is within the Saginaw Bay Watershed, and the Quanicassee River. To align with the vision of Tuscola County Park and Recreation a major focus of this master plan is to enhance and further establish Vanderbilt County Park and Campground as a Tuscola County destination, as well as the establishment, development, and creation of recreational opportunities which will further enhance Tuscola County’s sense of place.

Map 1 Tuscola County, Michigan



Administrative Structure

Map 2 Tuscola County Districts



Beginning in January of 1969 the County of Tuscola changed from a Board of Supervisors system of government to a Board of Commissioners system of government. Today the County of Tuscola has 5 Districts with one Commissioner elected for a two year term by the people from each district to form the Board of Commissioners. Each Commissioner represents more than one Township of Tuscola County. The Tuscola County Board of Commissioners ultimately is responsible for the policy and financial decisions, relating to parks and recreation of County owned facilities.

The current Tuscola County Board of Commissioners is as follows:

Commissioner Roger Allen for District 1 which is comprised of Akron, Columbia, Elkland, Elmwood, Fairgrove, Gilford, and Wisner Townships

Commissioner Thomas Bardwell for District 2 which is comprised of Almer, Ellington, Kingston, Novesta Townships and the City of Caro

Commissioner Christine Trisch for District 3 which is comprised of Dayton, Fremont, Indianfields, Koylton, and Wells Townships

Commissioner Craig Kirkpatrick for District 4 which is comprised of Arbela, Millington, Tuscola, and Watertown Townships

Commissioner Matthew Bierlein for District 5 which is comprised of Denmark, Juniata, and Vassar Townships, and the City of Vassar

Under Public Act 156 of 1917 and Public Act 261 the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners reestablished the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission in 2007. The Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission is comprised of 5 community members who are appointed by the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners, and Representatives from the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners, Drain Commission, and Planning Commission.

The current Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission members are as follows:

Robert McKay – President	Mary Stec
David Barrios	Steve Erickson
Kim Vaughn	Julie Matusak – Tuscola County Road Commission Liaison
Jerry Peterson	Tom Young – Tuscola County Board of Commissioners Liaison
Bob Mantey – Tuscola County Drain Commission Liaison	
Cynthia Kapa – Tuscola County Planning Commission Liaison	

The responsibility of the Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission is to share supervision, identify improvement areas, make recommendations regarding the annual budget and expenditures, and promotion of Vanderbilt County Park and Campground. Additional responsibilities are to develop

and recommend park and recreation policies, encourage local and county partnerships which support park and recreational opportunities, develop park and recreational strategies, and advocate for countywide parks and recreational opportunities as quality of life issues which benefit residents and visitors of Tuscola County.

The maintenance of Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is conducted by the Tuscola County Building and Grounds Supervisor and subordinates. The operation of Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is conducted by the Park Host. The Park Host is employed under contract with Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission. All appropriate revenue and expenditures are handled by the Tuscola County Controller.

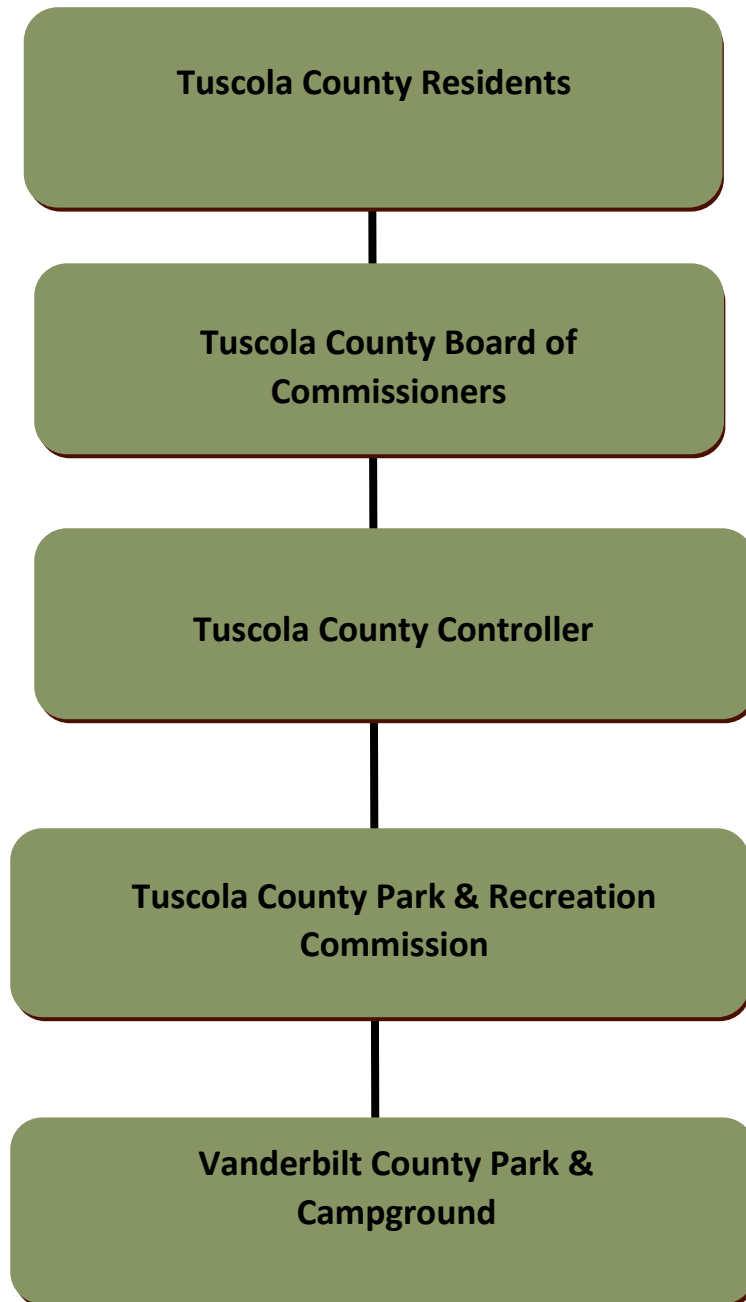
The fiscal year of the County of Tuscola, which includes parks and recreation, runs from January 1 to December 31. The current year's budget is comprised of \$6,700.00 for operation and maintenance and capital improvements. The main source of funding for parks and recreation is from Tuscola County's General Fund. The other source of funding is through campground, pavilion rental, and parking fees. Occasionally Tuscola County receives funding through State and/or Federal grants.

The County of Tuscola recognizes the contribution parks and recreational opportunities provide to the quality of life and the physical health of its citizens as well as the economic health of the region. This recognition has been made manifest in the intrinsic support of Tuscola County and Regional Park and Recreation efforts. Because of this inherent desire to be supportive of parks and recreation, the County of Tuscola is avidly dedicated to improving park and recreational offerings in Tuscola County.

Throughout Tuscola County volunteerism is a treasured and valued asset for public park and recreation areas. Because of the volunteers who gave of their time and experience, Vanderbilt County Park and Campground has greatly benefitted. For example a group of Volunteers created and developed the park sign and garden surrounding it as shown in the photo below.



The Authoritative Structure of Parks and Recreation of Tuscola County is as follows -



Recreation Inventory

Accessibility

Creating a park system that is safe, accessible and usable to all individuals within the community, including those with disabilities, is essential. A grading system has been developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to easily identify those parks and facilities, which are most, and least, handicap accessible and usable, based on the ADA guidelines. The following accessibility grading system uses a five (5) point system ranging from one, none of the facilities/park areas meets accessibility guidelines, to five, all of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines.

An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance assessment of Vanderbilt County Park and Campground was conducted in June, 2014. The assessment consisted of a visual inspection of each aspect of the park in regards to access and circulation in relation to the park facilities. As noted in the inventory listing most of the park does not meet all criteria for handicap accessibility.

The County of Tuscola will continue its efforts towards improving accessibility when improvements are made. Such improvements might include accessible parking, paved paths, barrier-free restrooms and activity areas, amenities, and signage.



Vanderbilt County Park and Campground was donated to Tuscola County by the late Frank Vanderbilt around the turn of the 20th century. This 18-acre specialty park sits among the shady, rustic shoreline of Saginaw Bay. It serves the recreational and camping needs of Tuscola County. The park's amenities include a pavilion with electric hook ups and picnic tables, playground equipment, picnic areas, grills, rustic restrooms, a central manual well pump, fire rings, a nature trail which accesses Saginaw Bay, 24 improved and 8 rustic campsites. The improved campsites are equipped with electric hook-up only. The Park and

Campground also includes a horseshoe pit, outdoor lighting, volleyball net, basketball hoop, and park benches. Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is open year round with camping available from April 15 through November 30. The entire park and campground meets accessibility guidelines and ranks a (3)

Grant Inventory

In 1989 Vanderbilt County Park and Campground received a grant award listed as project number BF89-357. This award has been closed and was used for drive and parking, shelter, and camping improvements.



Map 3 Vanderbilt County Park and Campground Location Map



(Map Source – Tuscola County Mosquito Abatement, 2014)

Tuscola County Park and Recreation Inventory Continued

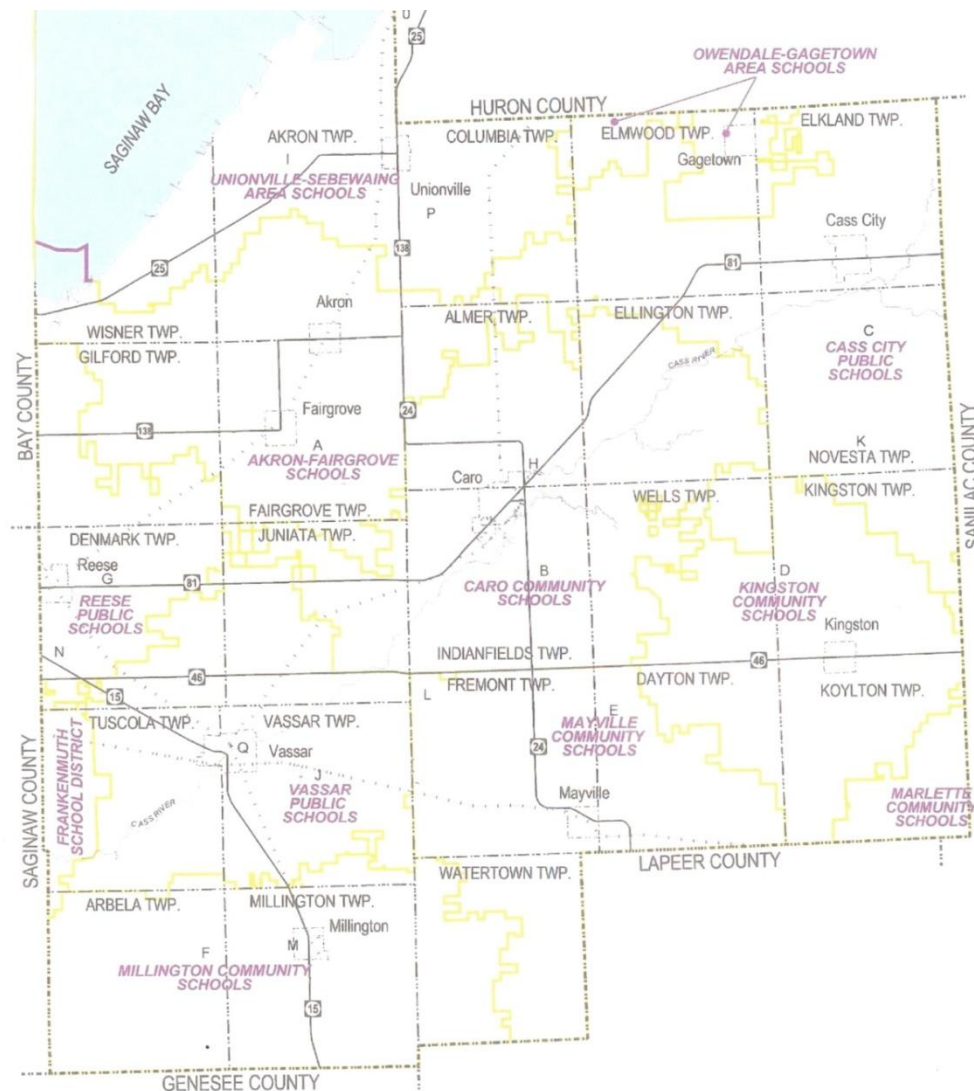
The County of Tuscola has the following Public Park and Recreational Opportunities of which are esteemed and treasured assets to Tuscola County.

- Village of Akron
 - Akron Park
- Township of Almer
 - Almer Township Hall (Darbee School)
 - Darbee Farm Park
 - AYSO Soccer Park
 - Almer Township Park
- Arbel Township
 - Arthur Latham Park
- City of Caro
 - Atwood Park
 - Bieth Park (Tuscola County Fairgrounds)
 - Chippewa Landing Park
 - Colonial Park
 - Williamsburg Subdivision Park
 - Northwood Heights Park
- Village of Cass City
 - Cass City Recreation Park
 - Cedarwood Park
 - Cass City Walking Trail
- Village of Fairgrove
 - Fairgrove Community Park
 - Mulberry Park
- Village of Gagetown
 - Village Park
- Township of Gilford
 - Gilford Township Park
- Township of Indianfields
 - Indianfields Township Park
- Village of Kingston
 - Kingston Memorial Park
- Township of Millington
 - Arthur Latham Park
- Village of Millington
 - Arthur Latham Park
- Southern Links Trailway
 - Liner Trailway Park comprised of regional and intergovernmental cooperative agreements
- Village of Mayville
 - Ohmer Park
 - Bodeis Park
- Village of Reese
 - Reese Community Park
 - Reese Memorial Park
- Tuscola Township
 - Community Park
- Village of Unionville
 - Unionville Community Park
 - Kemp Memorial Park
- City of Vassar
 - Harper Park
 - Hillside Park
 - White Birch Park
 - McKinley School Park
 - Vassar Lion's Park
 - Vassar Riverside Park
 - Vassar Riverside RV Park
 - Ivan Middleton Hall
 - Vassar Memorial Park
 - Vassar Rail Trail
 - Vassar Fairgrounds
- Township of Vassar
 - Vassar Township Park (new community park under development)
- Watertown Township
 - Fostoria Park
 - North Lake Murphy Park

As depicted on the following page on Map 4 the County of Tuscola has the following school districts

- Akron Fairgrove Schools
- Caro Community Schools
- Cass City Public Schools
- Frankenmuth School District – portion of Township of Tuscola
- Kingston Community Schools
- Marlette Community Schools – portion of Township of Koylton
- Mayville Community Schools
- Millington Community Schools
- Owendale Gagetown Area Schools
- Reese Public Schools
- Unionville Sebewaing Area Schools
- Vassar Public Schools

Map 4 Tuscola County School District Location Map

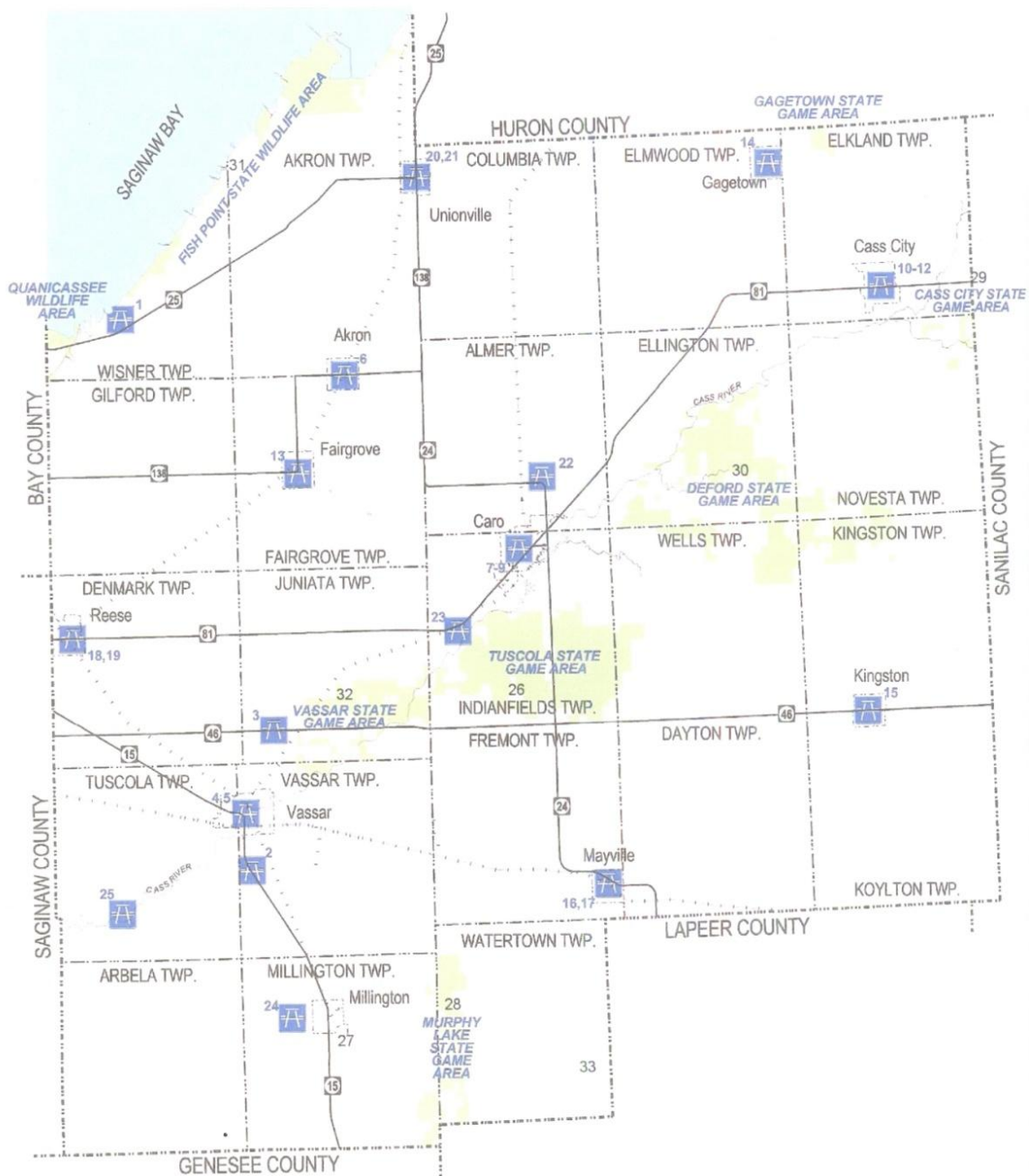


(Map Source – Tuscola County Mosquito Abatement, 2014)

The following is a list of the State of Michigan public land available for use in Tuscola County

- Almer Township State Game Area
- Cass City State Game Area (western portion; majority)
- Clark Lake State Game Area
- Columbia Township State Game Area
- Deford State Game Area
- Denmark Township State Game Area
- Elmwood Township State Game Area
- Fish Point State Wildlife Area
- Gagetown State Game Area (southern portion; majority)
- Murphy Lake State Game Area
- Quanicassee State Wildlife Area (eastern portion)
- Tuscola State Game Area
- Vassar State Game Area

Map 5 Tuscola County Parks and Recreation



(Map Source – Tuscola County Mosquito Abatement, 2014)

Resource Inventory

The well-being of the residents in the County of Tuscola is dependent upon educational, recreational, economic, and social opportunities. Therefore parks and recreation are essential to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of all ages in Tuscola County.

The intent of this portion of the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to examine and evaluate Tuscola County's existing public parks and recreational facilities as well as identifying areas within the County for future protection and/or public access.

This type of examination and evaluation will help to define important elements of parks and recreation within Tuscola County that will guide the County of Tuscola as it grows to ensure that a quality parks and recreation system becomes an integral part of that growth. The resource inventory of parks and recreation facilities in Tuscola County is evaluated in three ways.

Facilities by Classification – Parks are classified into different categories to determine the level and area they serve.

Facilities in relation to Population and Level of Service Standard: National standards for the provisions of parks and recreational facilities are applied to future park and recreational opportunities in Tuscola County.

Facilities by Geographical Distribution: The service radius of Tuscola County facilities with a focus on Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is analyzed to identify geographical gaps in park services.

Facilities by Classification

Overall Park Space

Tuscola County has approximately 608.5 acres of dedicated parks, open space, and recreation area, as illustrated on the preceding page with Map 5

Traditional park area standards set by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggest 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. With a 2010 U.S. Census recorded population of 55,729 and approximately 608.5 acres of parks and recreational land, Tuscola County has about 10.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which barely meets the national standard.

Classifications

The Park Classification system developed by the NRPA is used to classify Tuscola County's municipal owned park facilities. Park categories include:

Mini Parks

Mini parks generally address specific recreation or open space needs. Typically these parks cover less than one acre and have a service radius of less than ¼ mile.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are considered the basic unit of a community's park system and provide a recreational and social focus for residential areas. These parks desirably provide space for informal, active, and passive recreational activities.

The typical service radius for neighborhood parks is between ¼ and ½ mile. Neighborhood parks adequate in size to accommodate the requisite facilities often contain at least 5 acres; between 5 and 10 acres is considered optimal. Of this total acreage, 2 to 3 acres should be relatively flat open space area suitable for a number of activities, including "pick up" ball games and soccer practice.

NRPA standards call for between 1 to 2 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents. Tuscola County currently has about 65.7 acres of neighborhood parks. This translates into 1.2 acres per 1,000 residents, which is slightly within the NRPA standards of between 1 to 2 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents.

School Parks

School facilities can help to meet neighborhood park needs, particularly when located in areas not served by a municipal park. The playgrounds, open space, play fields and basketball courts at the schools often function as a neighborhood park and attract residents from the area.

School facilities are accessible to the public and thus serve park and recreation needs for the residents. Although these facilities often help meet a neighborhood's need for recreation space, the County of Tuscola should not depend on these sites to meet the neighborhood park needs. The County of Tuscola can however consider partnering with municipalities within the County in developing neighborhood parks in conjunction with or adjacent to school sites.

Community Parks

These types of parks typically include areas of diverse use and environmental quality. Such parks meet community-based recreation needs, may preserve significant natural areas and often include areas suited for intense recreational facilities. Typical criteria for community parks include:

- Adequate size to accommodate activities associated with neighborhood parks, but with space for additional activity.
- A special attraction draws people from a larger area, special environmental or cultural features, or specialized sports complexes.

Community parks generally contain between 20 and 50 acres and serve a variety of needs. The typical service radius of a community park is approximately ½ mile to 3 miles.

Traditional NRPA guidelines for community park areas call for 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents. Tuscola County has approximately 415.5 acres of community parkland which translates into roughly 7.4 acres per 1,000 residents. While it would appear that Tuscola County meets the NRPA guidelines for acres per residents, a closer examination reveals that many of the community parks do not meet the current wants and needs of residents concerning size and amenities.

Special Use Parks

These cover a broad range of facilities oriented toward a single use such as Campgrounds or Fairgrounds.

Trailway Parks

Trailway Parks are paths or roads used for walking, biking, or equestrian riding, and are an important part of recreation in a community. Trail use has become very popular among a wide variety of users. Trails are an important part of recreation and tourism in many communities. Trails provide linkages between parks, cultural and natural resources, recreation and wildlife areas, communities and other tourism destinations in and around the city. Trails linking parks and recreation facilities with school sites and natural areas offer residents and visitors numerous recreational opportunities and contribute to the overall quality of life in the community. Connecting parks and recreation areas with trails creates a walkable environment in the community. Trails also function as an attraction to a healthy lifestyle.

Tables 1.1 to 1.5 on the following pages summarize Tuscola County's parks and recreation facilities by classification.

TABLE 1.1 MINI PARK FACILITIES OF TUSCOLA COUNTY							
Location	Facility	Approximate Size (Acres)	Playground Areas	Playing Equipment	Courts	Special Features	
City of Caro	Atwood Park	0.75				Gazebo, Benches	
City of Caro	Colonial Park	1.5					
City of Caro	Williamsburg Subdivision Park	1.5			Softball		
City of Caro	Northwood Heights Park	1.5			Softball		
Village of Cass City	Cedarwood Park	2			Basketball		
Village of Mayville	Skate Park						
Village of Millington	Rotary Park						
City of Vassar	McKinley School	0.8	Yes	Yes		Benches	
City of Vassar	Hillside Park	0.6				Band Shell, Picnic Facilities	
City of Vassar	McKinley School Park	0.5					
City of Vassar	Vassar Lion's Park	0.75				Pavilions	
Village of Unionville	Kemp Memorial Park	0.5				Picnic Tables, Gazebo	
Total Mini Park Acres	10.4						
Acres per 1,000 residents	0.18						

TABLE 1.2 NEIGHBORHOOD PARK FACILITIES OF TUSCOLA COUNTY							
Location	Facility	Approximate Size (Acres)	Playground Areas	Playing Equipment	Courts	Special Features	
Village of Akron	Akron Park	4.00	yes	yes	Ball Field	Creek, Picnic Tables, Shelter, Restrooms	
Charter Township of Almer	Township Hall (Darbee School)	15.00	yes	yes		BBQ Grills, Picnic Tables	
Charter Township of Almer	AYSO Soccer Park	8.00			8 Soccer Fields	Concession Stands, Meeting Place, Restrooms	
Village of Fairgrove	Mulberry Park	5.00	yes	yes	Ball Fields, Tennis Courts	Building, Drinking Fountains, Pavilions, Picnic Area	
Village of Gagetown	Village Park	10.50			Ball Fields	Concession Stand, Bleachers, Restrooms	
Village of Kingston	Kingston Memorial Park	5.00	yes	yes	Basketball, Ball Diamond, Tennis	BBQ Grills, Pavilions, Picnic Tables, Restrooms	
Village of Mayville	Skate Park						
Village of Mayville	Bodeis Park	1.00	yes	yes	Ball Fields	Picnic Tables, Restrooms, Pavilion	
Village of Reese	Reese Memorial Park	4.00	yes	yes		Gazebo, Picnic Tables, Restrooms	
City of Vassar	Harper Park	7.5	yes	yes	Basketball	Pavilion, Benches, Horseshoe, Picnic Tables	
City of Vassar	White Birch Park	5.7	Yes	Yes	Basketball	Benches, pavilion, picnic tables and grills	
Total Neighborhood Park Acres	65.7						
Acres per 1,000 residents	1.2						

TABLE 1.3 COMMUNITY PARK FACILITIES OF TUSCOLA COUNTY

Location	Facility	Approximate Size (Acres)	Playground Areas	Playing Equipment	Courts	Special Features		
Charter Township of Almer	Darbee Farm Park	40.00	yes	yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits, Nature Trails, Pavilions, Picnic Area, Restrooms		
Township of Arbela, Millington, Village of Millington	Arthur Latham Park	86.2	yes	yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Soccer	BBQ Grills, Boy Scout Building, Camp Sites, Disc Golf, Horseshoe Pits, Exercise Trail, Nature Trails, Picnic Tables, Pump Water, Shelters, Stream Access		
City of Caro	Chippewa Landing Park	16.00	yes	yes	None	BBQ Grills, Boat Ramp & Dock, Fishing, Ice Skating, Pavilions, Restrooms, River Walk with Pedestrian Bridge		
Village of Cass City	Cass City Recreation Park	82.50	yes	yes	Basketball, Ball Fields, Tennis, Football, Volleyball,	1/4 Mile Track, Arts & Crafts Facility, BBQ Grills, Concession Stand, Restrooms, Horseshoe Pits, Nature Trails, Disc Golf, Stadium Seats, Swimming Pool, Toboggan/Sled Hill		
Village of Fairgrove	Fairgrove Community Park	8.00	yes	yes	Ball Fields	Picnic Tables, Shelter		
Township of Indianfields	Township Park	60.00	yes	yes	Ball Fields, Volleyball	Boardwalk, Canoe Launch, Master Gardener Garden, Nature Trails, Office Nature Center, Pavilions, Picnic Area/Tables, Restrooms, Fishing		
Village of Mayville	Ohmer Park	7.00	yes	yes	Ball Fields,	Picnic Area/Tables, Restrooms, Nature Trail, Disc Golf		
Village of Reese	Reese Community Park	12.00	yes	yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Shuffle Board, Tennis,	Concession Stand, Picnic Area, Restrooms, Shelter, Pavilion, Water Pond		
Township of Tuscola	Community Park	15.00			Ball Fields	Cass River Access, Concession Area, School Building		
Village of Unionville	Community Park	20	Yes	Yes	Ball Field, Basketball, Tennis,	Ice Rink, Picnic Area, Restrooms, Shelter		
Township of Watertown	Fostoria Park	33	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Basketball,	Concession Stand, Skate Park, Grand Stands, Horseshoe Pits, Ice Skating, Pavilions, Picnic Facilities		
City of Vassar	Vassar Memorial Park	35.8	yes	yes	Basketball, Ball Fields, Softball	Benches, bleachers, restrooms		
Total Community Park Acres		415.5						
Total Acres per 1,000 residents		7.4						

TABLE 1.4 SPECIAL PARK FACILITIES OF TUSCOLA COUNTY						
Facility	Approximate size (Acres)	Playground Areas	Playing Equipment	Courts	Special Facilities	
Vanderbilt County Park and Campground	17.85	Open Flat Area	Yes		BBQ Grills, Camp Sites, Fire Rings, Chemical Restrooms, Nature Trail, Pavilion, Picnic Areas, Pump Water Well	
Bieth Park Tuscola County Fairgrounds	40	Open Flat Area	Yes	Basketball, Shuffle Board, Tennis, Volleyball	Arts & Crafts Facility, Auditorium, Exercise Course, Grand Stand, Horse Riding Area, Horse Stables, Outdoor Hockey Rink, Race Track,	
Vassar Riverside RV Park (City of Vassar)	8.6	Open Flat Area	Yes	Volleyball	Boat Ramp, Campsites, Picnic Facilities, Shelter	
T. North Pavilion (City of Vassar)	2.6	No		Basketball	Hockey rink, bleachers, storage building, and Farmer's Market	
Vassar Fairgrounds (City of Vassar)	20.9	No		No	Horse track, bleachers, horse stable, and restrooms	
North Lake Murphy Park	1				BBQ Grills, Boat Ramp, Fishing/Swimming, Ice Skating, Pump Water	
Vassar Township Park	26	No	No	None	Under development	
Total Specialty Parks Acres	116.9					
Acres per 1000 residents	2					

Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is classified as a specialty park. There currently are no NRPA Standards for specialty parks.

Southern Links Trailway

The Southern Links Trailway passes through portions of three counties, Genesee, Lapeer, and Tuscola. It is part of the U.S. Numbered Bicycle Route #20. This Bicycle Route is part of a national route that runs through the southern portion of Tuscola County and connects to a bike trail in Frankenmuth.

Southern Links Trailway is a linear park trailway and spans approximately 10.2 miles long, extending from the Village of Millington, at the north end, to the Village of Columbiaville, at the southeast end. The trail passes through the municipalities and townships of the Village of Columbiaville, Marathon Township, Village of Otter Lake Township, Forest Township, Millington Township, Village of Millington, Vassar Township, and City of Vassar.

While many of the parks in Tuscola County have trailways the Southern Links Trailway is the only linear park trailway.

In evaluating Tuscola County's park and recreation offerings by classification the following points arise:

1. Tuscola County currently has 7.4 acres of community parks per 1,000 residents, which is within the NRPA standard of 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents.
2. Tuscola County currently has 1.2 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 residents, which is slightly within the NRPA standard of 1 to 2 acres per 1,000 residents.

Facilities in Relation to Population and Level of Service Standards

One of the most important indicators of future parks and recreational demand and interest is the forecast for demographic change. Presently, the aging of the Baby Boomer Generation is one of the most significant trends affecting outdoor recreation. After the Baby Boomer Generation birth rates declined until the majority of the Baby Boomers became parents themselves, which created the societal generation known as Generation Y.

In order to plan for the current and future parks and recreational resource needs of Tuscola County it is important to know and consider the population age makeup of residents. Table 2 below is the 2010 U.S. Federal Census depiction of an age breakdown of Tuscola County residents.

Table 2		
Total Population Age Breakdown	Number	Percent
Total Population	55,729	100.0%
under 5 years	3,128	5.6%
5 to 9 years	3,434	6.2%
10 to 14 years	3,816	6.8%
15 to 19 years	4,182	7.5%
20 to 24 years	2,929	5.3%
25 to 29 years	2,901	5.2%
30 to 34 years	2,976	5.3%
35 to 39 years	3,235	5.8%
40 to 44 years	3,695	6.6%
45 to 49 years	4,405	7.9%
50 to 54 years	4,526	8.1%
55 to 59 years	4,133	7.4%
60 to 64 years	3,538	6.3%
65 to 69 years	2,932	5.3%
70 to 74 years	2,099	3.8%
75 to 79 years	1,566	2.8%
80 to 84 years	1,092	2.0%
85 years and over	1,142	2.0%
Source: 2010 Federal Census		

As depicted from Table 2 above the largest population age brackets of Tuscola County are the 'Baby Boomer' generation. The aging of the Baby Boomer Generation is one of the most significant trends affecting outdoor recreation.

From the 2010 U.S. Federal Census approximately 39 % (21,633) of Tuscola County residents are comprised of Baby Boomers. Because of improved health, fitness, and lifestyle changes, many members of the Baby Boomer Generation are participating in recreational activities at ages well past those in previous generations. Members of this generation often look for park and recreation destinations that offer activities such as camping, trailway, or water sport activities.

After the Baby Boomer Generation birth rates declined until the majority of the Baby Boomers became parents themselves, which created the societal generation known as Generation Y. Approximately 15,736 residents or 28% of the 2010 Tuscola County population is comprised of Generation Y.

Members of this societal age group often make up the largest park and recreational user group in America. As Generation Y continues to enter the workforce and have families of their own, their specific wants and needs will increasingly shape parks and recreational supply and demand.

Their values and desires are very different from those of their parents', the Baby Boomer generation. Tendencies within this group include a demand for instant access to information, high levels of multitasking, and low rates of physical activity. Interestingly, Generation Y often seeks out park and recreational offerings that are based on family group or friend activities, such as picnic and campground areas.

In evaluating the population age brackets of Tuscola County it is apparent the largest age group is the Baby Boomer Generation. As this group continues to enter into retirement the wants and needs of Tuscola County residents concerning parks and recreational opportunities may shift from the present demand.

In addition analysis shows the second largest resident group is Generation Y. This societal group differs in park and recreational wants and needs compared to those of their parental group the Baby Boomers. Another factor that warrants consideration is the emergence of a variety of new and non-traditional family structures. These new family types which are often found in Generation Y have created many new and different leisure patterns and recreation demands.

More adults in Generation Y remain single until their 30's and 40's, with many of those that do marry either postponing having children until later in their lives, or choosing to not have children at all. At the same time, single-parent families have also increased.

For all age groups, free time is perceived as an opportunity to spend time with family and friends and as such, they often seek out recreation activities that allow group participation. While group activities are popular among single-parent and no-children families, members of these demographics are often also interested in the more active and unusual recreation available in experiential trips and other non-traditional recreation activities. Traditional team sports such as football have reached a plateau in their growth, while more modern activities such as canoe, kayaking, and disc golf continue to rise in popularity.

Level of Service Analysis for Future Development

The recreational opportunities offered by parks are important community assets that help make a community an attractive place to live, work and invest in. Table 3 on the following page identifies the future park needs for Tuscola County based on local and national standards. Tuscola County's population for 2010 was 55,729. Projections for future park needs are based on national standards and the current existing level of service offered for parks and recreation, utilizing a 2025 projected population of 66,879 based upon an industry standard of 0.02% population increase per year.

Based on the existing level of service of Tuscola County the current parks and recreational acreage seems adequate. However as the wants and needs of residents 'changes, this may increase the demand for additional park and recreational acreage.

Based on national standards Tuscola County is projected to have a deficit of 68.1 acres of neighborhood parks and 119.5 acres of community parks and will need to add about 187.6 acres of parkland by 2025. When considering the 'Baby Boomer' population of Tuscola County, the demand for parkland and recreational activities therein may be greater than the national standard.

Park Type	Existing Acreage	Existing Acres per 1,000 Residents	NRPA Standard per 1,000 Residents	2025 Total Parkland Need based on existing level	Additional Parkland Needed	2025 Parkland Need based on National level	2025 Surplus (Deficit)
Mini Park	10.4	0.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Neighborhood Parks	65.7	1.2	1 – 2 Acres	80.3	14.6 acres	133.8 acres	(68.1 acres)
Community Parks	415.5	7.5	5 – 8 Acres	501.6	86.1 acres	535 acres	(119.5 acres)
Specialty Parks	116.9	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total Park Area	608.5	10.9	10 Acres	581.9	100.7 Acres	668.8	(187.6)

This analysis is based on specific national standards and does not take into account the geographical location of parks, accessibility of parks, service area for parks, and facilities available in the parks. Also, a valid point of consideration is that as the wants and needs of the residents' changes, the existing parks may not provide necessary facilities such as ball fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, soccer fields, or other amenities.

In this case the demand for new parks and recreational facilities may be higher than that required by the national standards. In addition to traditional parks and recreational facilities, many communities are also experiencing demand for less traditional facilities such as skate parks, splash parks, disc golf courses, etc.

Facilities by Geographical Distribution

While traditional urban areas often use the NRPA standards of ¼ mile and ½ mile service radius for park facilities it is important to note the park facilities located in Tuscola County serve the majority of residents who live in rural areas. With this in mind the NRPA Standards should be adjusted to incorporate a rural service area where needed especially when considering community parks.

The majority of communities throughout Tuscola County appear to be satisfied with the current geographical distribution of their parks and recreational facilities. While in the future this may change due to the wants and needs of the public as well as the appearance of new park and recreational opportunities.

Because Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is a specialty park there are no NRPA Standards. There is however a high demand and need concerning its geographical distribution of service. Currently there is no access to Saginaw Bay from Vanderbilt Park and Campground. This prevents park users from

enjoying the recreational offerings of Saginaw Bay. Additionally, with no available access to Saginaw Bay, canoe and kayakers who wish to camp at Vanderbilt County Park and Campground are prevented from doing so because there is no available portage or launch area.

Tuscola County Land and Water Resources

Physical Characteristics

With Saginaw Bay as its northwest border, Tuscola County is predominantly a rural, agricultural community with several small and medium-sized villages, and two cities spanning 813 square miles. The land changes from a generally flat terrain in the northwest to a steeply rolling terrain in the southeast with the winding Cass River bisecting the county.

Topography

The topography of Tuscola County changes from a generally flat terrain (lake plain) in the northwest, to gently rolling in the central county area to a steeply rolling terrain in the southeast. The dominant landforms are the result of the Wisconsin Glaciation, (the last glacial period, a.k.a. “Ice Age”). Elevation in the county runs from about 600 feet to 900 feet above sea level.

Water Resources

The principal water resources in Tuscola County are the Saginaw Bay, which is part of Lake Huron, and the north branch of the Cass River, one of four major tributaries that flow into the Saginaw River. Approximately 1,259 miles of county-established drains are under the auspice of the Tuscola County Drain Commissioner. In addition, there are private-partnership drains under the auspices of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality as well as other natural water resources throughout the county.

The north branch of the Cass River flows in a southwest direction from the headwaters near the Village of Ubyly (Huron County). The Cass River then intersects the northwest corner of Greenleaf Township (Sanilac County) and continues its flow into the Village of Cass City (Tuscola County) where several streams and creeks feed into the river. (The south branch of the Cass River near the Village of Cass City meanders in a southeast direction through Sanilac County while the Greenleaf Creek in Greenleaf Township connects the waterways of the Cass River to the Pigeon River in Huron County.)

From the Village of Cass City, the Cass River continues to flow in a southwest direction through the City of Caro, City of Vassar, and City of Frankenmuth (Saginaw County), ultimately feeding into the Shiawassee River. Several creeks, drains, and streams (e.g., Creenan Creek, Goodings Creek, Millington Creek, and Perry Creek) feed into the Cass River, creating opportunities for recreation activities such as canoeing, fishing, and swimming.

The northwest corner of Tuscola County borders Saginaw Bay, featuring approximately 20 miles of Lake Huron shoreline. Much of the land adjacent to the bay is part of the Fish Point and Quanicassee Wildlife Areas. There are no cities or villages directly on the bay (like Sebewaing in Huron County), and the land along the edge of the wildlife areas is used for residential and agricultural applications. There are several boat launch areas along the bay and Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is adjacent to the wildlife area.

The Saginaw Bay, Cass River, and more than ten small inland lakes represent the water resources of Tuscola County (inland lakes include Becroft, Caro, Cat, Cedar, Evergreen, Harmon, Harvey, Mud, Murphy, North, Odessa, Phelps, and Shay). Only two of the inland lakes— Murphy Lake and Shay Lake — have a lake-level control structure.

The Cass River drainage system is also an important recreational source for the county and for the “Thumb” area of east central Michigan. Flooding has been an ongoing problem for the City of Vassar. The Cass River 100-year floodplain boundaries within the area are indicated on the “FHA Flood Hazard Boundary Map” prepared in 1976 by the Federal Insurance Administration (HUD) publication. Consideration of this information and its effects should be used in determining future recreation land acquisition and development along the Cass River.

Fish and Wildlife Resources

Species of fish and wildlife in Tuscola County are “numerous”, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The Cass River is described as a good warm-water fishery for bass, crappies and pike. The county’s forest vegetation supports such wildlife species as deer.

Tuscola County is located in the east central part of the Lower Peninsula at the base of the “Thumb.” The county contains 812 square miles comprised of a total of 519,793 acres. Four broad areas divide the county from northeast to southwest.

In the first area, beginning at the southeastern part of the county, there is undulating hilly loam and sandy soils with wet soils and potholes and depressions in the numerous lower areas. The second general area lies between the first described area and the Cass River. This nearly level to rolling area consists of sandy soils utilized for pasturing animals, and some wooded areas. The next area lies to the north side of the Cass River and consists of rolling loam and sand. Cash crops and livestock farming are common in this portion of the county. The remaining area lies between the third area and Saginaw Bay and is comprised of nearly level to undulating loam and sandy soils. These are also used extensively for cash crops.

Networks of deep dredge drains lead into the Saginaw Bay drain in the northwestern third of the county. The drainage basin of the Cass River includes the southern two-thirds of the county. The Cass River drains to the Saginaw River before finally emptying into Saginaw Bay. A soil survey of Tuscola County has been prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation service in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and Michigan Technological University. The current survey was issued in September, 1986 and replaces surveys completed in 1926 and 1974.

Soils of Tuscola County

The soils of Tuscola County may be categorized into ten broad soil associations of which include the following:

- 1) Essexville-Aquents-Tappan Association – These soils are nearly level, poorly drained to very poorly drained sandy and loamy soils on lake margins, beaches, till plains and lake plains. They are located along the Saginaw Bay.
- 2) Tappan Association – These soils are nearly level, poorly drained and loamy soils. They are located on moraines and till plains.
- 3) Tappan-Londo-Avoca Association – These soils are nearly level, poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained, loamy and sandy soils. They are located on lake plains, till plains and moraines.
- 4) Metamora-Capac-Corunna Association – These soils are nearly level to undulating somewhat poorly drained to poorly drained loamy soils located on till plains and moraines.
- 5) Wixom-Wolcott-Pipstone Association – These soils are nearly level to gently undulating, somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained, sandy and loamy soils located on outwash plains, moraines and till plains.

- 6) Guelph-Londo-Tappan Association – These soils are nearly level to rolling, well drained to poorly drained, loamy soils located on moraines and till plains.
- 7) Perrin-Wasepi-Gilford Association – These soils are nearly level and gently undulating, running a range from moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained loamy and sandy soils on outwash plains, lake plains and beaches.
- 8) Pipestone-Granby-Chelsea Association – These soils are nearly level to gently rolling somewhat poorly drained, poorly drained and somewhat excessively drained sandy soils on outwash plains, moraines, lake plains and beaches.
- 9) Marlette-Capac-Spinks Association – These soils are nearly level to steep, well drained and somewhat poorly drained loamy and sandy soils. They are located on moraines, outwash plains, and beaches.
- 10) Houghton-Adrian Association – These soils are nearly level, very poorly drained, organic soils in bogs on moraines, till plains and outwash plains.

Vegetation

There are two main forest types in Tuscola County Aspen-Birch and Maple Beech-Hemlock. Much of the land in Tuscola County is utilized for agriculture. Main agricultural crops include corn, dry beans, winter wheat, sugar beets, soybeans, oats, and grass-legume hay.

Climate

The climate in Tuscola County is generally fair with annual precipitation of 28 inches and average snowfall of 37 inches. On average temperatures range from 13 degrees to 29 degrees in January (winter) to 57 degrees to 84 degrees in July (summer). Tuscola County's growing season is 122 days, with an average of 15 days a year rising above 90 degrees Fahrenheit and 14 days a year falling below 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

Planning Methods

Systems Approach to Planning

In its continuing effort to provide quality parks and recreation opportunities for its citizens, the County of Tuscola used the Systems Approach to Planning to update this Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a tool to guide the development of parks and recreational facilities and their locations over the next five years.

This master plan is the latest effort by the County of Tuscola to establish new recreational goals and objectives for the County. The plan will also provide the County of Tuscola eligibility for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other state and federal sources to assist in reaching parks and recreational goals to further instill a sense of place.

Public Input Process

Public participation in the Tuscola County community is always sought and welcomed. As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requires at least two opportunities for public participation, with the first taking place before or during the preparation of the plan (i.e. community workshop, focus group, survey, questionnaire, citizen luncheon) and the second taking place as an advertised public meeting at which time the plan is presented for adoption.

The County of Tuscola more than met the Michigan DNR requirements by conducting three (3) focus group sessions, an opportunity for public input through a community meeting as well as the required 30 day period for review and comment on the draft plan. The County of Tuscola provided an opportunity for public input, comments, and suggestions utilizing a public meeting and an advertised public hearing of which a copy of the advertisement of these meetings may be found on pages 29 and 31. Additionally we have offered the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan at numerous public meetings throughout the Tuscola County Communities.

Public Meeting

A public meeting was held Wednesday February 17, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. before the Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission Meeting. The proposed Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was open for review, comment, and suggestion from members of Tuscola County communities. Members of the Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission were available to answer questions and/or clarify information or take suggestions from community members.

Public Review

The proposed Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was available for a 30 day review by area residents in 3 locations the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners Chambers, 125 N. Lincoln Street, Caro MI, the Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation, 141 South Almer Street, Caro MI, and the County of Tuscola website www.tuscolacounty.org. There was also notification of the availability of the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan for review and an upcoming public meeting clearly posted in the Tuscola County Advertiser of which a copy is located on page 29. The Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was also made available for review, comment, and suggestions to the Eastern Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG).



Goals and Objectives

Guiding Principles and Philosophies

The County of Tuscola adheres to and strives to continually obtain the following guiding principles and philosophies concerning park and recreational opportunities in Tuscola County.

- A. Provide accessible facilities and leisure opportunities for all persons regardless of their physical and socio-economic characteristics.
- B. Efficiently employ Tuscola County resources, in concert with other public, private, and volunteer resources, to provide a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities plus avoid duplication of services where unnecessary.
- C. Actively seek the most appropriate acquisition and uses of community open space and natural features to meet the community's needs for active, structured recreation, as well as passive enjoyment of the out-of-doors.
- D. Plan for the continued availability of financial, physical, and personnel resources to support the parks and recreation system.

The County of Tuscola formulated the following goals and objectives based upon the input received at multiple open public meetings, the community input session on Wednesday January 14, 2015 held in the Board of Commissioners Chambers at 125 N. Lincoln Street, Caro Michigan and the demographic and physical characteristics of Tuscola County.

Goal 1

Provide safe, broad, and community based park and recreational opportunities that improve the overall quality of life for all residents and visitors of Tuscola County.

Parks serve as a natural gathering place for community residents and provide free or inexpensive recreation opportunities. To enrich the quality of life in Tuscola County, it is important to continue to provide and improve park facilities. Tuscola County residents fall below the average incomes ranges, therefore, they wish to have community parks with basic amenities that appeal to all age groups. Community input is a solid indicator of what residents in the community want in terms of recreational facilities. The County of Tuscola will continue to plan its improvements based upon the needs expressed in formal and informal input sessions.

- Objective – Continue to add amenities to Vanderbilt County Park and Campground based upon community input.
- Objective – Have the Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission play a more active role in park and recreation initiatives throughout the County.

Goal 2

Continue to improve and upgrade the County of Tuscola recreational and support facilities so as to offer the community parks that it can be proud of.

Park facilities are among the most visible indicators of a community's identity and pride, as well as local tax dollars at work. The County of Tuscola wishes to provide quality facilities that show they are an active community that takes pride in its community facilities.

- Objective – Provide a dock and launch ramp for Canoe and Kayaks in Vanderbilt County Park and Campground
- Objective – Provide potable water to Vanderbilt County Park and Campground

- Objective – As improvements are made to Vanderbilt County Park and Campground it is important to prepare for the future and acquire additional acreage which will meet the expanded need as Vanderbilt County Park and Campground becomes a desired destination for campers.

Goal 3

Provide recreational opportunities for people of all abilities. The County of Tuscola wishes to provide recreational opportunities for all residents. This will be especially important as the population in the community continues to age because mobility and accessibility issues increase with age.

- Objective – Make sure all improvements and upgrades to park facilities, where feasible, are barrier free.

Goal 4

Intergovernmental agreements and best use of common resources - The County of Tuscola is in a predominantly rural area, with Townships, Villages, and Cities having limited recreational resources. Working within our County boundaries and surrounding governmental bodies makes logical sense for all parties involved.

- Objective – Increase partnerships and collaborative opportunities within the County and Region

Goal 5

The County of Tuscola is an avid supporter of parks and recreation within Tuscola County and would like to strive and assist in making them fiscally responsible while meeting the park and recreational needs of the residents and visitors of Tuscola County.

- Objective - Seek additional grant support for improving the park and recreational offerings in Tuscola County
- Objective – Create a Tuscola County Park Authority to work as a County wide cooperative to pool resources in an effort to better serve the communities
- Objective - Seek a County millage to support park and recreation improvements, maintenance, creation, and development

Action Program

With goals and objectives in place, the County of Tuscola was able to develop a 5-year action program to work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives. The Action Program details the direction the County of Tuscola wishes to take over the next five years in order to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of park and recreational opportunities within the County. These decisions were made based on recreational trends, national standards, participation data at existing facilities, community input and opinion, and demographic trends in comparison and analysis.

Potential Capital Improvements (CIP) for this Parks and Recreation Master Plan have been established not only to provide a framework for decision makers, but also to enable the County of Tuscola to apply for grant funding for these proposed projects. The CIP Schedule is not a fixed element and is neither all-inclusive nor exclusive. The schedule merely reflects the results of the input from County of Tuscola board members and input from the community. It is very likely the schedule and plan will be amended at some point during its life due to unanticipated circumstances, such as changing recreational trends, community opinion, available funding, and/or private donations.

The following Capital Improvement (CIP) Schedule provides an outline and guide as to the desires of the community. Major priorities for the coming years should the funding and opportunities become available include installing potable water lines in Vanderbilt County Park and Campground, acquire additional property adjacent and/or in the vicinity of Vanderbilt County Park and Campground, and open up access to the Saginaw Bay for canoeist and kayakers from Vanderbilt County Park and Campground.

TUSCOLA COUNTY – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE – 2017 – 2021 PARK & RECREATION MASTER PLAN						
FACILITY / PROJECT	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL COST
Vanderbilt County Park and Campground						
1 Install Potable Water Lines	X					\$3,500
2 Open up Access to Saginaw Bay		X				\$5,000
3 Construct Restrooms w/Showers			X			\$100,000
4 Construct a Sanitary Station for Campers				X		\$50,000
5 Install Playground Equipment					X	\$25,000
6 Refurbish or Replace Picnic Tables	X					\$15,000
7 Develop Walking Trail			X			\$5,000
8 Install Water Lines at Improved Campsites		X				\$10,000
9 Improve Driveway					X	\$5,000
10 Update Lighting to energy efficient		X				\$15,000
11 Install Universal Design Campfire Rings at Campsites	X					\$3,000
12 Acquire land to expand campgrounds					X	\$400,000
TOTAL						\$636,500

Action Program Rational

Should the funds become available the future improvements to Vanderbilt County Park and Campground include:

Install Potable Water Lines – currently the only water source for campers and visitors is a hand pump well which varies in degrees of the level of salty brine. This was the highest priority suggested by the focus group and the community.

Open up Access to Saginaw Bay – currently there is no easy access to Saginaw Bay. Additionally canoe and kayakers along Saginaw Bay do not have access to Vanderbilt County Park and Campground. This was a strongly suggested initiative from the focus group and the community.

Construct Restrooms with Showers – the only available restrooms currently available is one male and one female chemical toilet. The community has suggested that they would like to have flush toilet restrooms with shower facilities.

Construct a Sanitary Station for Campers – there currently is no sanitary station for campers. It has been suggested that installing a sanitary station for campers would greatly improve the park as well as prevent a potential environmental hazard.

Install Playground Equipment –From the Community input received and the focus group it was suggested to install additional playground equipment.

Refurbish or Replace Picnic Tables – the current picnic tables are several years old and in need of refurbishment and/or replacement.

Develop a Walking Trail – in the park that has a surface that is stable and provides access for all community members to use. In addition said trail should also provide a pleasing atmosphere one in which provides a sense of place and a greenway.

Install Water Lines at Improved Campsites – campers currently do not have access to potable water in the campground.

Improve Driveway – the current driveway is in poor condition and needs to be upgraded to allow for easier access to the park as well as for persons of all levels of mobility.

Update Lighting to Energy Efficient – the currently lighting is several years old and not very energy efficient. By replacing the lighting with energy efficient lighting this would help to improve the parks carbon footprint as well as obtaining an energy cost savings.

Install Universal Design Campfire Rings – currently there are no campfire rings installed in the campgrounds. With placement of universal design campfire rings this will allow access for persons of all levels of mobility.

Acquire Land to Expand Campgrounds – with the improvements in place it is projected that the campgrounds will easily exceed capacity and need to be expanded.



Adoption Process

Public Meeting Notice

The following public notice was placed in the Saturday, February 6, 2016 edition of the Tuscola County Advertiser newspaper.





Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission

125 W. Lincoln Street
Caro, MI 48723

989.672.3700
Fax: 989.672.4011
www.tuscolacounty.org

MINUTES OF PUBLIC REVIEW HELD BY THE TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Held on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 – 1:30 p.m.
as convened in the Commissioners' Board Room of the
H.H. Purdy Building, 125 W. Lincoln Street, Caro MI

Roll call: David Barrios, Steve Erickson, Cynthia Kapa (Planning Commission), Bob Mantey (Drain Commissioner), Julie Matusak (Designated Road Commissioner), Robert McKay (Chairman), Jerry Peterson (Vice Chairman), Mary Stec, Kim Vaughn, Tom Young, (Tuscola County Board of Commissioners).

Call to order: With quorum present consisting of David Barrios, Steve Erickson, Cynthia Kapa, Bob Mantey, Julie Matusak, Robert McKay, and Jerry Peterson, the February 17, 2016, special meeting and public review of the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

Others present: Mike Miller, Director of Tuscola County Buildings and Grounds Department; Vicky Sherry, Communications Director of the Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation; Russell Fall, Chairman of the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee; and Pam Shook, Assistant Park Host of Vanderbilt County Park and Campgrounds.

Business: Consistent with a Public Notice published in the February 6, 2016, edition of The Advertiser, the business of the meeting consisted of holding a public review of the Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan for 2017-2021.

Public comment consisted of only one item: Russell Fall, Chairman of the Vassar Township Parks and Recreation Committee commented that the reference to the Vassar Township Park on page 17 should read, "Vassar Township Community Park". There were no other comments presented by anyone.

Adjournment: Moved by Barrios, supported by Peterson, voted unanimously to adjourn at 1:32 p.m.

Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission Mission Statement

The mission of the Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission is to provide and coordinate year-round recreational opportunities for people of all abilities, and to meet the needs of area residents and regional visitors while protecting wildlife and nature.

Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission Resolution



Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission

125 W. Lincoln Street

989.672.3700

Caro, MI 48723

Fax: 989.672.4011

www.tuscolacounty.org

TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION 2017 – 2021 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL

WHEREAS, the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission has undertaken a Five Year Park and Recreation Master Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities, and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period of 2017 through 2021; and

WHEREAS, a public comment session was held in the Commissioners' Board Room at 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, Michigan on Wednesday, February 17, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. to provide an opportunity for citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Park and Recreation Master Plan and a 30 day public review is now being provided; and

WHEREAS, the Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission has developed the Park and Recreation Master Plan for the benefit of the entire community; and

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission hereby approves the 2017 – 2021 Tuscola County Park and Recreation Master Plan as a guideline for improving park and recreation for the residents of the Tuscola County community and further recommends the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners adopt said plan.

AYES: 7; NAYS: 0; ABSTAINED: 0; ABSENT: 3 MOTION CARRIED

I DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY OF THE MOTION MADE AND PASSED BY THE TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AT A SPECIAL MEETING HELD IN THE COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ROOM OF THE H.H. PURDY BUILDING LOCATED AT 125 W. LINCOLN STREET, CARO MI. 48723, ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016 AT 1:35 P.M. AS TAKEN FROM THE MINUTES OF THAT MEETING.


Robert W. McKay – Chairman

FEB. 23, 2016

Date

Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission Mission Statement

The mission of the Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission is to provide and coordinate year-round recreational opportunities for people of all abilities, and to meet the needs of area residents and regional visitors while protecting wildlife and nature.

Public Hearing Notice

The following public notice was placed in the Saturday, March 12, 2016 edition of the Tuscola County Advertiser newspaper.

Saturday, March 12, 2016, The Advertiser

PUBLIC NOTICE
Tuscola County Parks & Recreation
Master Plan Public Hearing
March 24, 2016
8:30 a.m.

The Tuscola County Board of Commissioners is conducting a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. to receive public comments regarding the 2017-2021 Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Public Hearing will be held at the HH Purdy Building which is located at 125 W. Lincoln Street, Caro, MI 48723. Copies of the proposed Parks and Recreation Master Plan are available for review at the County Controller's Office which is located at the same address as above, at the Tuscola County Economic Development Corp. located at 141 S. Almer Street, Caro, MI and on the Tuscola County website, www.tuscolacounty.org.

"This meeting is open to all Members of the Public Under Michigan's Open Meetings Act."

Public Hearing Minutes

TUSCOLA COUNTY
Parks and Recreation
Master Plan Public Hearing
March 24, 2016 Minutes
H. H. Purdy Building

Commissioner Thomas Bardwell called the public hearing for the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan held at the H.H. Purdy Building in the City of Caro, Michigan, on the 24th day of March, 2016 to order at 8:30 o'clock a.m. local time.

Commissioners Present: District 1 - Thomas Young, District 2 - Thomas Bardwell,
District 3 - Christine Trisch, District 4 - Craig Kirkpatrick (via Google Hangouts),
District 5 - Matthew Bierlein

Commissioners Absent: None

Present: Mike Hoagland, Clerk Jodi Fetting, Tisha Jones, Eean Lee, Andrew Dietderich, George Pattullo, Betty Pattullo, Mike Pattullo, Carmell Pattullo, Vicky Sherry, Register John Bishop, Norm Stevens, Jim Tussey, Marty Geyer, Sandy Nielsen, Gary Anderson, Gretchen Tenbusch, Denny Anderson, Russell Speirs

Vicky Sherry presented to the Board regarding the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Master Plan would be for the time period of 2017 to 2021. The Master Plan has been available for review at the Tuscola County Controller's Office, the Tuscola Economic and Development Corporation's Office and the Tuscola County website www.tuscolacounty.org.

Public Comment:

-Gary Anderson would like the Parks and Recreation Committee to work toward and establish a 10-mile Rail Trail from the Caro area to the Colling area. He believes that the land can be acquired as it is owned by the State. He has discussed this with the Parks and Recreation Committee. Gary would like this turned into a Rail Trail Project to help promote Tuscola County. He feels it would be a great benefit to the community.

Public Hearing adjourned at 8:36 a.m.

Jodi Fetting
Tuscola County Clerk

Tuscola County Park and Recreation Master Plan Resolution of Adoption

**County of Tuscola
125 West Lincoln Street
Caro, MI 48723**

Resolution Regarding Adoption of 2017-2021 Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners held on March 24, 2016, at 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, Michigan 48723, at 8:30 a.m.

Present: *District 1 - Thomas Young, District 2 - Thomas Bandura, District 3 - Christian Irish, District 4 - Craig Kirkpatrick, District 5 - Matthew Berlin*
Absent: *None*

The following preamble and resolutions was offered by
Commissioner Berlin and supported by
Commissioner Irish.

WHEREAS, The Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission has undertaken a Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2017 and 2021,

WHEREAS, an open public meeting for review was held on February 17, 2016, at 1:30 p.m. at the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners Chambers, 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, Michigan, 48723 and

WHEREAS, a 30 day public review of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Draft was provided to the public at the Tuscola County Controller's Office, 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, Michigan 48723, Tuscola County Economic Development Corporation, 141 South Almer Street, Caro, Michigan 48723, and the Tuscola County website www.tuscolacounty.org to provide an opportunity for citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and

WHEREAS, the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission has developed the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the benefit of the entire community and to adopt the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a document to assist in meeting the recreational needs of the community, and

Tuscola County Park and Recreation Master Plan Resolution of Adoption continued

WHEREAS, a public hearing session was held on March 24, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at the Tuscola County Board of Commissioner's Chambers, 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, Michigan 48723, and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Tuscola hereby adopts the 2017-2021 Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a guideline for improving parks and recreation for the residents of the County of Tuscola.

AYE: Young, Bardwell, Kuciw, Kirkpatrick, Berlin

NAY: none

ABSENT: none

RESOLUTION DECLARED: ✓ ADOPTED UNADOPTED

Jodi Fetting
Jodi Fetting, Tuscola County Clerk

I HEREBY CERTIFY, that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners at the County of Tuscola at a regular meeting held on the March 24, 2016 at 8:30 a.m., at 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, Michigan 48723, and I further certify that a public notice of such meeting was given as provided by law.

Jodi Fetting
Jodi Fetting, Tuscola County Clerk

March 24, 2016
Date

Tuscola County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes March 24, 2016

Draft
TUSCOLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 24, 2016 Minutes
H. H. Purdy Building

Commissioner Thomas Bardwell called the meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Tuscola, Michigan, held at the H.H. Purdy Building in the City of Caro, Michigan, on the 24th day of March 2016, to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m. local time.

Prayer – Commissioner Bierlein

Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Trisch

Roll Call – Clerk Jodi Fetting

Commissioners Present: District 1 - Thomas Young, District 2 – Thomas Bardwell, District 3 - Christine Trisch, District 4 – Craig Kirkpatrick (via Google Hangouts excused at approximately 11:15 a.m.), District 5 – Matthew Bierlein

Commissioner Absent: None

Also Present: Mike Hoagland, Clerk Jodi Fetting, Tisha Jones, Eean Lee, Andrew Dietderich, George Pattullo, Betty Pattullo, Mike Pattullo, Carmell Pattullo, Vicky Sherry, Register John Bishop, Norm Stevens, Jim Tussey, Marty Geyer, Sandy Nielsen, Gary Anderson, Gretchen Tenbusch, Denny Anderson, Norm Daniels, Jim Matson, Russell Speirs, Heather Thomas

Adoption of Agenda -
16-M-041

Motion by Trisch, seconded by Bierlein to adopt the agenda. Motion Carried.

Action on Previous Meeting Minutes -
16-M-042

Motion by Trisch, seconded by Bierlein to adopt the meeting minutes from the March 10, 2016 meeting. Motion Carried.

Brief Public Comment Period - None

Consent Agenda Resolution -
16-M-043

Motion by Bierlein, seconded by Trisch that the following Consent Agenda Resolution from the March 21, 2016 Committee of the Whole Meeting be adopted. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Agenda Reference:** A
- Entity Proposing:** COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16
- Description of Matter:** Move to approve a 12-month extension of the Material Recovery Facility agreement with the City of Caro and all appropriate signatures are authorized.
- Agenda Reference:** B
- Entity Proposing:** COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16
- Description of Matter:** Move that per the March 4, 2016 request from the Mosquito Abatement Director that the 2016 Mosquito Abatement budget be amended by \$185,334.53 through the use of fund balance to make the final payment on the Mechanic/Storage Garage which was supposed to occur in 2015 but will not occur until 2016.
- Agenda Reference:** C
- Entity Proposing:** COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16
- Description of Matter:** Move that the 2015 Drain Commissioner Annual Report be received and placed on file.
- Agenda Reference:** D
- Entity Proposing:** COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16
- Description of Matter:** Move that per the March 7, 2016 letter from the Drain Commissioner that the Revolving Drain Fund be increased from \$410,000 to \$510,000 to meet the increasing cash flow start-up costs of drainage projects. (The Revolving Drain Fund is repaid after funds from assessments and other sources are received to pay for the drainage project).
- Agenda Reference:** E
- Entity Proposing:** COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16
- Description of Matter:** Move to concur with the hiring of Tyler Kuhl to the position of Dispatcher effective March 26, 2016 contingent upon satisfactory physical and background check.

Agenda Reference: F

Entity Proposing: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16

Description of Matter: Move to concur with the hiring of Amy Garza to the position of Dispatcher effective March 12, 2016 contingent upon satisfactory physical and background check.

Agenda Reference: G

Entity Proposing: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16

Description of Matter: Move to concur with the hiring of Lynn Nigl as an irregular part-time Dispatcher effective March 12, 2016 at step 7 of the pay grade. (This employee was at the step 7 pay grade when she retired from Dispatch).

Agenda Reference: H

Entity Proposing: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE 3/21/16

Description of Matter: Move that per the February 11, 2016 letter of request from the Future Youth Involvement to use the Courthouse Lawn to place a sign to raise awareness of their cause from April 16, 2016 to April 23, 2016.

New Business -

-Wind Energy Update - Mike Pattullo provided an update to the Board regarding the meetings that have occurred in Ellington Township regarding the Wind Farm Project. He informed the Board that Elmwood Township has entered a 1-year moratorium on a wind farm project in that Township. Mike reviewed the various distance and decibels requirements that is causing concern for Ellington Township residents.

Recessed at 8:30 a.m. for the Parks and Recreation Public Hearing
Reconvened at 8:36 a.m.

-Parks and Recreation Master Plan -

16-M-044

Motion by Bierlein, seconded by Trisch that the Vanderbilt Park Capital Improvement Plan be approved. Motion Carried.

16-M-045

Motion by Bierlein, seconded by Kirkpatrick that the Resolution of Authorization for the 2016 Michigan DNR Passport Grant application be approved and authorized for submission. Motion Carried.

16-M-046

Motion by Bierlein, seconded by Trisch that per the recommendation of the County Parks and Recreation Commission that the 2017 – 2021 Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan be adopted by resolution. Roll Call Vote - Young - yes; Bardwell - yes; Trisch - yes; Kirkpatrick - yes; Bierlein - yes. Motion Carried.

-Wind Energy Update Continued - Mike Pattullo continued his presentation of the Wind Energy Update. Denny Anderson provided information regarding his findings on decibels. Norm Stevens provided a handout on additional sound pressure limits for wind energy. Jim Tussey updated the Board regarding Almer Township. Gilford Township project was discussed. In summary, the group of concerned citizens are not necessarily against windmills they are concerned with the Township Ordinance. They are concerned with the health and welfare of the Township residents and the loss of use of a homeowner's property. Norm Stevens addressed the Board with his concerns. Commissioner Bierlein asked Gretchen Tenbusch to forward the documentation from the presenter she had speak regarding the health and welfare of wind turbines to residents. The report was prepared from self-reported surveys. The Board would like to consider resolution wording asking the Township Boards to re-consider their ordinance based on the information presented by the concerned citizens. Register Bishop suggested to the group of concerned citizens to go to Townships that do not have an ordinance in place to educate them. He also stated as a current member of the Tuscola Township Planning Commission, at times local government does not appreciate the County government interfering at the local level.

Recessed at 10:35 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:51 a.m.

-Animal Control Update - Jim Matson, Animal Control Director, reviewed the 2015 Animal Control Statistics.

-Health Department Audit Presentation (Item was to be on agenda and was missed) - Heather Thomas from Gardner, Provenzano, Thomas & Luplow PC presented to the Board the favorable audit for the Tuscola County Health Department.

16-M-047

Motion by Bierlein, seconded by Trisch to receive and place on file the Tuscola County Health Department audit for the year 2015. Motion Carried.

-Dispatch Paging Contract with American Messaging - Sandy Nielsen explained the contract to the Board

16-M-048

Motion by Trisch, seconded by Bierlein that per the request of the Dispatch Director that the Dispatch Paging contract with American Messaging be renewed for a two year period and all appropriate signatures are authorized. Motion Carried.

-Dispatch Out-of-State Travel Request -

16-M-049

Motion by Trisch, seconded by Bierlein that per the March 22, 2016 letter of request from the Dispatch Director that she be authorized for out-of-state travel to attend the National Association of Communication Officers National Conference from August 14, 2016 through August 17, 2016. (Costs will be 100% reimbursed by the Michigan Chapter of APCO). Motion Carried.

-Hanover Insurance Company - Release, Satisfaction & Non-Disclosure Agreement - Mike Hoagland explained the matter to the Board.

16-M-050

Motion by Bierlein, seconded by Young to approve the Release, Satisfaction and Non-Disclosure Agreement with Hanover Insurance Company (Zimco's insurance carrier) regarding the displacement of county data and all appropriate county officials are authorized to sign the Agreement. Motion Carried.

-Wind Turbine Information Packet Approval - Mike Hoagland reviewed the draft Information Packet. Commissioner Trisch would like to review in greater detail prior to publishing on the website. Matter Tabled.

-IRS Mileage Rate Change - Mike Hoagland explained the reason for the change.

16-M-051

Motion by Trisch, seconded by Young that per Internal Revenue Service guidelines the county mileage reimbursement rate be decreased from the current \$.575 per mile to \$.540 per mile effective March 25, 2016. Motion Carried.

-Update Regarding Air Advantage - Mike Hoagland reviewed the response from Scott Zimmer regarding the recent news releases regarding Air Advantage. Mike Hoagland has prepared a draft letter to send to our Senators and Representative.

16-M-052

Motion by Trisch, seconded by Bierlein that because Air Advantage (a major internet service provider for Tuscola County and the Thumb) has allegedly defaulted on \$13.9 million in loans with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development that notification be sent to U.S. and State Senators and State Representative explaining that disruption of service from this situation would be a potential catastrophe. Also, notification to include explanation that intervention must occur to prevent this situation which could detrimentally impact 911 emergency services, hospitals, schools, libraries, businesses, and private residents. Also, all appropriate signatures are authorized. Motion Carried.

-Resolution Regarding Wind Energy (matter added) - Commissioners discussed the possibility of drafting a resolution on behalf of the Board. Commissioners would like Mike Hoagland to prepare a draft resolution for review at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Old Business - None

Correspondence/Resolutions -

-Bond Process for the Defined Contribution Retirement Plan is almost completed.

COMMISSIONER LIAISON COMMITTEE REPORTS - Updated reports will be provided at the next Board meeting due to time constraints.

KIRKPATRICK

Board of Health

Community Corrections Advisory Board

Dept. of Human Services/Medical Care Facility Liaison

Land Acquisition

MI Renewable Energy Coalition

MEMS All Hazards

MAC-Environment Energy Land Use

Oil/Shale Work Group

Cass River Greenways Pathway

Local Unit of Government Activity Report

Tuscola In Sync

NACO- Energy, Environment & Land Use

YOUNG

Dispatch Authority Board
County Road Commission
Board of Public Works
Senior Services Advisory Council
Mid-Michigan Mosquito Control Advisory Committee
Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative
Parks & Recreation
Local Unit of Government Activity Report
MAC Economic Development & Taxation Committee

BARDWELL

Economic Development Corp/Brownfield Redevelopment
Caro DDA/TIFA
MAC Economic Development/Taxation
MAC 7th District
Local Unit of Government Activity Report
TRIAD
Human Services Collaborative Council
Behavioral Health Systems Board

BIERLEIN

Genesee Shiawassee Thumb Works
Human Development Commission (HDC)
Tuscola 2020
Recycling Advisory Committee
Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
Great Start Collaborative Council
Local Unit of Government Activity Report
Tuscola In-Sync
MAC Board of Directors
Human Services Collaborative Council
Region VI Economic Development Planning
MAC-Economic Development & Taxation

TRISCH

Board of Health
Planning Commission
Economic Development Corp/Brownfield Redevelopment
Local Unit of Government Activity Report
Animal Control
Solid Waste Management

Closed Session - None

Other Business as Necessary - None

Extended Public Comment - None

Meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Jodi Fetting
Tuscola County Clerk