



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY
Oshkosh, Neenah, Menasha

PARKS IN THE OSHKOSH AREA

October 2009

The advocacy work of the League of Women Voters is directed at issues on which action by a branch of government will have an impact on the lives of individuals and on our democracy. Whatever the issue, the League believes efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement, and well defined channels for citizen input and review.

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Introduction

The League of Women Voters of Winnebago County periodically reviews its positions to determine if they continue to be effective as a guide for action. In 2007 the League board selected the Parks and Recreation position for review. This position was several decades old. To provide information to update the position, the League Board formed a Parks Study Committee to conduct a study. The committee met from September 2008 through May 2009 and

- Reviewed the 2003 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for the City of Oshkosh
- Visited and evaluated all city and area parks
- Researched a wide variety of issues
- Hosted programs for members with the city arborist and the city's storm water utility engineer
- Met with local planning and park staff
- Prepared a report and presented its findings to the League board and membership

This document is the result of that study.

Study Area

The study area includes the City of Oshkosh and the surrounding towns of Algoma, Black Wolf, Nikimi and Oshkosh. Focus, however, is primarily on the City of Oshkosh. League is in the process of developing a similar study for the Neenah-Menasha area, reflecting the recent merger of the Oshkosh Area League with the Neenah-Menasha League to form the League of Women Voters of Winnebago County.

Study Committee

The Parks Study Committee consisted of Jan Scalpone, chair, Frankie Mengeling, Tina Haffeman, Anne Hintz, Jeanne Shiras, Kathleen Propp, and Donna Lohry. The League board and members reviewed the study and adopted the new parks position at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Report Contents

The following components are included in this document:

- **Parks and Recreation Position.** This position is intended to guide local League action. It expands the previous position to address issues relevant to 21st century park management. It includes overall park policy recommendations that are easily translatable to city policies.
- **Action Plan: 2009-2010.** These eight priority recommendations address immediate opportunities for city action in fall, 2009. The action plan was forwarded to the Oshkosh City Manager and relevant city staff and committees prior to 2010 budget deliberations.
- **Park Issues in the Oshkosh Area.** League compiled information from city staff, the 2003 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, other communities, and personal observation to help its members develop the new position. The report can be read quickly and is intended to be objective and educational
- **Individual Park Recommendations.** League members visited each park and compiled a parks inventory similar to that found in the 2003 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Included here is a list of recommendations for each park. We anticipate this information will be useful when the city updates its plan.

For a complete list of parks in the City of Oshkosh, check

<http://www.visitoshkosh.com/recreation-sup.cfm?RecreationCatID=6>.

For county parks, check <http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/Parks/Index.htm>

Parks and Recreation Position League of Women Voters of Winnebago County

The League of Women Voters of Winnebago County believes parks, open space and recreational opportunities are important to the quality of life in urban areas. We support actions and policies that ensure park and recreational facilities are adequate to meet local and areawide needs now and in the future.

A. New Parks

1. Support acquisition of new park land where needed
2. Promote provisions for parks wherever new areas are subdivided
3. Promote green spaces as infill in developed areas
4. Encourage alternative methods of financing park acquisition

B. Facilities

1. Support safe, well-maintained facilities compatible with neighborhoods
2. Promote park and recreational facilities and activities for all ages
3. Support adequate funding for park maintenance and improvements
4. Support protection of park areas from encroachment.
5. Support development and implementation of a pedestrian and bicycle plan including construction of walking and biking paths to connect key public facilities in the community and link to county and regional trails.
6. Encourage development of marine facilities to accommodate many types of craft.
7. Promote public access to the waterfront wherever possible
8. Support cultural facilities that enhance the community

C. Policies

1. Support continuation of a Parks Advisory Board with diverse interests
2. Promote timely updating and implementation of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
3. Support a comprehensive events policy that considers community, vendor and neighborhood needs.

D. Communication

1. Promote attractive and clear identification signage where appropriate.
2. Promote tasteful historic and other instructional or descriptive signs as needed
3. Ensure availability of up-to-date printed and electronic information about park and recreation facilities.

E. Sustainability

1. Ensure environmentally sound maintenance and management practices
2. Support preservation and enhancement of natural systems and open spaces
3. Promote naturalization of shorelines where feasible
4. Encourage use of natural landscaping and prevention and control of invasive species
5. Promote storm water management practices in parks where feasible (rain gardens, parking lot vegetation, small retention ponds, swales, etc.)
6. Promote energy efficient facilities
7. Support an aggressive urban reforestation program

F. Cooperative Activities

1. Promote cooperative park-related activities among the city, school district, county and towns and encourage regional facilities and town parks where feasible.
2. Promote interdepartmental cooperative planning between Parks, Community Development and Public Works where their missions overlap.

Action Plan: 2009-2010

Overall Oshkosh Park Policy Recommendations

- **Increase the parks operations and capital improvements budgets.** This budget has been static for at least five years. It's time the city recognizes the importance of parks to the community.
- **Include funds in the 2010 CIP to update the 2003 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.** This plan is past due for its five year update.
- **Boost the tree planting budget.** Civic groups and individual citizens have bought into public/private programs, but the city needs to make a big splash to get this initiative moving.
- **Plant vegetative buffers along waterways.** The city is spending millions on storm water engineering solutions. Let's show some inexpensive, high visibility restoration projects.
- **Start the Riverwalk.** If we want to attract developers they should see something besides weed-filled fields.
- **Use a portion of the stimulus funds for energy efficiencies in parks.** Modify the ever-flushing toilets, install energy efficient lighting, replace fixtures with energy efficient models.
- **Add historic signage in all parks.** Let's tell visitors how these parks got their names and showcase their past history before the information is lost. This is a low cost project other communities use to indicate they care about their parks and their cultural roots.
- **Recognize the abundance and importance of Oshkosh waterfront parks when selecting the new parks director.** Experience and knowledge should cover land and water stewardship; environmentally sound management practices; waterfowl and harbor management; and laws and methods to control and prevent weeds, pests and invasive species

Parks Issues in the Oshkosh Area June 2009

Contents

- Study Process
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- Gift Policy
- Information Availability
- Interdepartmental Cooperation
- Area Cooperation

Study Process

The League of Women Voters of Winnebago County approved a study to update its local Parks and Recreation position at its 2007 and 2008 annual meetings. A Parks Committee was formed to review the position. The committee met from September 2008 through May 2009 and

- Visited and evaluated all city and area parks,
- Researched various issues,
- Hosted member programs with the city arborist and the city's storm water utility engineer, and
- Met with local planning and park staff.

Following is a summary of the committee's findings. Members discussed these findings on April 27, 2009. Based on their discussion, the committee formulated a new parks position (attached). This position was adopted at the annual meeting in June, 2009.

Facility Summary

The Oshkosh park system consists of 324.3 acres of mini, neighborhood, community, regional, special purpose, and open space parks. Park facilities include playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, playing fields, recreational trails, picnic areas, shelters, boat launch facilities, sledding hill, open space areas, concessions, a beach, and a roller hockey rink. The city also has a zoo, Little Oshkosh, a public golf course and a state of the art aquatic facility, amphitheatre, and skate park.

The committee assessed a number of factors for each park. Overall, we concluded:

- Parks are generally clean and well-maintained.
- Most are family oriented.
- Playground equipment appeared to be safe. The city has a schedule for updating equipment.
- Signage is lacking in some parks or additional information is needed.

- Restroom facilities are well-maintained but lack environmental features, e.g., automatic lighting systems. Although recommended in the plan, no new restrooms have been built.
- Splash pad and skateboard facilities are lacking on the east and north sides
- Few small trees and bushes are evident, indicating lack of funding for landscaping.
- Waterfront areas lack vegetative buffers
- Walking trails/sidewalks along the river are in poor condition
- The riverfront lacks observation decks
- Quarry Park's methane problem limits its usefulness as a park
- Many of the recommended facility improvements in the 2003 Outdoor Recreation Comprehensive Plan have not been implemented.

Funding Existing Parks

The parks operating budget has remained at approximately \$1.4 million since 2005. Payroll for about 18 positions (includes seasonal workers) accounts for slightly more than 80 percent of expenditures. The remainder is spent on utilities, materials, supplies and contractual services. Income is primarily from general revenues, with fees contributing to support of the water park, golf course, boat launches and the Amphitheater.

Capital improvement projects included in the CIP have averaged \$436,900 over the last five years (2005-2009), supplemented by \$140,000 in outside funds (\$100,000 for Amphitheater storage building, \$40,000 to renovate the skate park) plus \$675,000 from the city's general fund to build Leach Amphitheater restrooms. Most capital improvement projects for parks are funded by issuing municipal bonds or notes, although significant private donations have funded major improvements at the zoo and eliminated zoo entrance fees. Major private donors also funded the new Pollock Water Park and the Leach Amphitheater.

Acquiring New Parks

No new parks have been created since the Leach Amphitheater and Pollock Water Park. Both of these were made possible by large grants from local citizens. The Parks Department notes it "hasn't done a thing" in regard to new parks because of "our [financial] position."

Oshkosh park acquisition is generally funded through land dedication or fees in lieu of land at the time a subdivision is platted, or with grants. The Community Development Department spearheads this process with some input from the Parks Department. When appropriate, land can be dedicated using a formula shown in the Parks Plan. The city can ask for up to 1100 sq ft per single family unit and 900 sq ft per attached multi-family unit. Where land dedication is not appropriate, the current fee structure is \$400 per single family home and \$330 per multi-family unit. Currently there is about \$250,000 in the park land fund. These funds must be used within 10 years and specifically for parks.

Evidently other cities also assess fees in lieu of land or impact fees to help with park acquisition and improvements, allegedly some as much as \$1500-\$2500 per lot. No current comparison is available. Our fees may be low. Most cities use the payment in lieu of land dedication approach rather than the impact fee approach; it is easier to gain a developer's cooperation. Darryn Burich, city Director of Planning, says the city does not use the impact fee process because it requires a thorough study and has more stringent conditions. The Town of Algoma uses the impact fee process with a fee of approximately \$825 per single family lot.

It should be noted that for a few recent years fees in lieu of land dedication were not collected because of a state law and prior to that the city never collected such fees on multi-family

buildings. This fee structure varies from community to community. Old information about other cities is found in the Parks Plan Table 4-1.

Grants may also be used, as in the case of the Sawyer Creek Trail adjacent to Carl Traeger School. However, most grants require matching funds. The Waterways Commission funded a 50% matching grant for floating docks adjacent to the Leach Amphitheater; this project is on hold.

Community Development works with the Parks Department to design and construct a park in newly developed areas. This will occur in the Lesnick Farm development west of Highway 41 and north of Highway 45. The 2003 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan has designated areas where it is desirable to create parks. Roughly these areas are on North Westhaven Drive north of Witzel and south of Highway 21; along the Lake Winnebago shoreline south of 20th street; west of Highway 41 south of Highway 44; east of Highway 41 south of 20th street; and along the lake shore of Lake Winnebago north of the city, east of the Canadian National Railroad tracks. New parks and park areas on the “radar screen” would be the Riverwalk area, that portion of the Wiouwash Trail that falls within the city limits after the renovation of Highway 41.

Boat Launch Facilities

The City of Oshkosh has four large boat launch facilities at Rainbow Park, Fugleberg Park and 24th Ave. boat launch along S. Main St., and Menominee Park. There is also a small boat launch facility at Steiger Park adjacent to FVTC on the Fox River and at the Mill St. boat launch on Lake Winnebago. Sailboat mooring and docks restricted to sailboats are offered in Millers Bay. Larger sailboats need to use private marinas. Oshkosh boating facilities are very popular and have a good reputation.

The boat launch fee has raised about \$471,000 (approx. \$60,000 per year) since its inception in 2002. This money has been used for improvements to launch sites, docks, and boat related activities, and for operational expenses such as the ranger who enforces the rules. The fee is lower than other municipalities; Oshkosh charges \$3 daily while the average is \$5.

The city is considering adding new launch ramps at Fugleberg Park and on the north side of Rainbow Park in response to high demand. Longer range plans call for boat launch improvements in the south shore redevelopment area at the end of Michigan St. on the Fox River. Transient docking is available up to 48 hours at Rainbow Park, Riverside Park, and Millers Bay per ordinance. Weed control has been practiced in Millers Bay but other launch sites may also need it. No dredging is needed at this time.

Winnebago County maintains seven boat launch sites. All but one (Eureka) have toilet facilities. Some have picnic areas. A boat launch permit is required, with daily fees posted at \$5. The county spends about \$45,000 annually from these fees to maintain the landings. The county also spends \$85,000 annually to place and maintain 121 lit and unlit buoys as navigational aids. In addition, the Sheriff's Department appropriates approximately \$32,000, along with state grants, towards operating its boat patrol.

Hiking and Biking Trails

The Parks Department offers a one page handout classifying the following as trails:

Abbey Park, Westhaven Drive... bark trail

Glatz Nature Preserve (Doty and South Main)... bark trail

Menominee Park.. asphalt trail

North High Park... bark trail

Roe Park, Washington Ave... asphalt trail
Sawyer Creek Nature Preserve-Rusch Park... asphalt trail
Shapiro/UWO owned... asphalt trail
South Park... asphalt trail
Carl Steiger... asphalt trail
William Steiger... asphalt trail
Stevens Park... asphalt trail

A portion of the Wiouwash Trail is also within the city. The Wiouwash Trail currently extends across four counties. The configuration and future plans for this trail and the Mascoutin Valley Trail can be found on Winnebago County's park Web site. While there is no comprehensive trail plan for the city, the city has a plan for the Riverwalk and is in the process of updating the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. A draft plan is anticipated for December 2009.

The Parks Department currently displays no maps, brochures or detailed information about its trails. An attractive full color brochure was published by WINGS (Winnebago County Geographic System Project) in 2006 showing some trails. A number of these have recently been located and are distributed by the city's Health Department.

Signage

Some parks currently have no identification signs. The Parks Department has removed what it considers "tacky" signs and is in the process of redoing them. Eventually they will redo all identification signs for a consistent look. Department personnel construct signs during slow times at a cost of about \$300-400 each. Parks also display instructional metal signs where needed. For example, all boat launches have warnings about the spread of VHS, an invasive virus that could devastate fish. A few signs mark historical events; more of these, especially along the Riverwalk would enhance the area. Lacking also is descriptive signage referencing when a park was founded, how it got its name, etc.

Environmental Considerations

Except for the golf course, the Parks Department has mostly stopped using chemicals in the city's parks. The Department now appears to be more sensitive to environmentally sound park management practices. The immediate impetus for instituting these practices may be economic. For example, fertilizer is no longer used. Biodegradable herbicides are used only in spot situations—around trees or to get rid of noxious weeds. Mowing extends only to where the riding mower can reach; for our waterfront parks, that translates into a more natural looking waterfront. The creeks throughout the city are left in their natural state. Cost savings projects for energy conservation are also on the drawing board: insulating buildings, a review of park lighting, converting to automatic on-and-off lights in restrooms open 24/7, installing sensor systems timed to lock and unlock doors, and elimination of automatic flushing in men's restrooms.

Not only cost savings, but state and federal regulations may provide an impetus for environmental improvements. The city is under urban requirements to reduce polluted run-off. Oshkosh solutions have been mainly construction of retention ponds and catch basins through the Stormwater Utility. Public Works and the Stormwater Utility apparently are proceeding with storm water management planning with little or no input from the Parks Department., although Parks is charged for its impervious surfaces. Opportunities exist to incorporate rain gardens, shoreline buffers, fewer mowed areas, native prairie plantings, increased native tree and shrub planting and fewer hard surfaces for parking and play areas. These ideas are on the radar screen. A rain garden may be incorporated in the South Park parking lot and in the new parking lot proposed for the 400 block on Main Street. A consultant's plan for Millers Bay proposes

enhancing the shoreline with native shrubs and trees. The same plan proposes purchase of a weed harvester to control weeds around the boat launches, rather than continued chemical treatment in the water.

The city has recently responded positively to two environmental issues in parks. To address citizen concern, the city has negotiated with UWO to test water quality regularly at the beach in Menominee Park during swimming season for no cost. Citizens also protested the proposed construction of piers at Riverside Park because of unstable and polluted sediments in that part of the river. The project has been stopped while conversations with various regulating agencies continue.

Forestry

The city arborist, Bill Sturm, with a crew of four, is caretaker of all trees in parks, terraces and city property in Oshkosh. His research indicates Oshkosh has the fewest trees citywide compared to several other cities our size. Oshkosh is estimated to have 10,000, Fond du Lac 20,000, Appleton 40,000-60,000, and Eau Claire 75,000. Oshkosh's budget for tree planting is also considerably smaller than neighboring cities--\$3,000 compared to about \$20,000 for Fond du Lac and \$50,000 for Appleton.

The city planted about 250 trees last year. Many were privately funded through the Memorial Tree and ReLeaf Oshkosh programs. A popular site for memorial trees is the northern section of Miller's Bay. ReLeaf Oshkosh also uses private donations to plant terrace trees. About 3,000 trees are currently located on terraces. The city is in the process of surveying its trees and so far has entered 7500 in its GIS system. When completed, this survey will help target areas where trees need to be planted and improve eligibility for state grants. As a source for future trees, the city has established a tree nursery on the north end of Riverside Cemetery.

The city recently passed an ordinance requiring tree planting on terraces in all new subdivisions. Other policies about tree planting and replacement are at the city arborist's discretion. When trees are about to be destroyed because of sewer or other development in public areas, the arborist works with the project director to save what large trees he can and develops a plan for replanting. Efforts are also made to replace trees lost in storms, although we had a major set back in the storm of June, 2001. For trees on private land, the arborist can act if the tree falls on or is a danger to the right of way. The arborist also will respond to private inquiries about tree problems.

Increased community interest in beautification, storm water reduction, and climate change is expected to gain support for more tree planting. Several Rotary groups, Progress Oshkosh, the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and the Sustainable Oshkosh Advisory Board already are working to help the city maintain its status as a "Tree City." In addition, a consultant recently completed a Vision Plan for the city with input from 2300 residents, recommending an extensive city-wide tree planting program. Areas suggested for massive plantings are the state and county highway corridors, terraces, parks, the landfill and downtown.

Encroachment on Park Land

Encroachment on park land has not been an issue in this area. If anything, it has been the reverse: the city sometimes attempts to encroach on private recreational lands (e.g. Westhaven detention ponds.) A while back, a private development proposed for the highway 21/41 area infringed on the edge of Lakeshore Golf Course, but no development occurred, possibly because of upcoming reconstruction of Highway 41. Recently WisDOT negotiated for some golf course land for the highway 21/41 interchange. The city will be compensated for the land exchange.

Encroachment is always a possibility, however. A few years ago Fond du Lac faced a controversial situation involving proposed private marina and museum construction in Lakeside Park. Citizen protests stopped development.

Park Advisory Board

Established in 1977, the Park Advisory board meets the second Monday of the month at 6:00 PM in Room 404 of City Hall. It has eight members who applied for membership and were appointed by the mayor for two year terms; the terms are staggered. One member of the City Council is appointed by the mayor to this board. Most members have been on the board for years. Three recent appointments were made due to the death of one member and the departure from the city of two others.

Since its inception, board members have primarily been interested in sport and recreation uses at the parks. It is not clear if there is representation reflecting the major role parks play in preserving green space and providing environmental benefits. Members with environmental backgrounds would be helpful in dealing with parks fronting lakes, rivers and creeks; tree planting; cemetery care; etc. A balance between members interested in sports/recreation and members interested in environmental, sustainable practices might offer more comprehensive recommendations.

The Board recommends items for approval by the City Council. Most of these items arise from the Park Department itself although the Board may recommend an item that it has developed. Citizens interested in having an item on the Parks Advisory Board meeting agenda, may do so by contacting the Park Director or offering a statement during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Planning

The current *Outdoor Recreation Comprehensive Plan* (2003) was to be updated in 2008. This did not happen. The plan serves as a guide for city activity and must be less than five years old to procure state and federal grant money; therefore, an up to date and statistically correct plan is necessary. Citizens should be encouraged to participate in discussion updating the plan.

Events Policy

Many cities in Wisconsin about the size of Oshkosh have special events policies in place or are currently working on completing such policies. Appleton, Janesville and Waukesha have special events policies and Madison has a very detailed one just for parks. Oshkosh city attorney Lynn Lorensen said city department heads (including the Parks Department) are now working on a general special events policy anticipated to be finished by the end of 2009.

Oshkosh hosts a wide range of special events that make use of city property and resources. Without a special events policy, permission for events is currently given by the city council on an individual basis. Events are required to have proper insurance, food vending and liquor licenses, and comply with city ordinances on the serving of liquor and noise restrictions.

At this time, no public notice is given nor input sought on the type or number of special events. Also not addressed is the cost to the city of services such as police, park workers, and sanitation. Without a proactive policy, parking, traffic, and emergency situations accompanying special events are not anticipated with plans and there are no limits on attendance numbers or frequency of events scheduled.

Gift Policy

Some cities also have gift policies. A gift acceptance policy sets standards or guidelines for that process. Such a proactive and transparent policy helps everyone involved in the gifting process understand what is appropriate and acceptable, possibly avoiding difficult situations. In Oshkosh the public library has a gift policy to guide acceptance of books and other donations. The city is currently developing a city-wide gift policy. Motivation to develop this policy stems from several past and potential gifts. A recent fishing pier donated for Miller's Bay in Menominee Park caused considerable contention in the neighborhood, raising the issue of developing a gift policy. On tap now is a proposed observation tower for Menominee Park to be funded by a service organization, and an old railroad car offered to the city. Both of these projects are on hold until the City Council approves a gift policy.

Information Availability

Winnebago County distributes a very nice small booklet describing its parks and boat launches. Its Web site also provides information about park facilities. The city has nothing similar. If asked for information about parks, it offers a one page sheet from the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with a matrix indicating what facilities are found where. While the city Web site shows required fees, it has little descriptive information about city parks, although it has recently launched a separate Web site for the Leach Amphitheatre which is top notch. A Web search, however, turned up a list of city parks and their facilities on the Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau's site. The Northwestern also publishes an annual section on city amenities which includes recreational facilities in the area. We are exploring options about making this information available to the public on an on-going basis.

Interdepartmental Cooperation

The Community Development Department takes primary responsibility for negotiating parkland dedication or payment in lieu of land dedication at the time new subdivisions or certified survey maps creating land divisions are approved. The Parks Department is consulted but does not appear to take an active role. The Parks Department becomes responsible for any improvements on the park land when the subdivision is developed.

The Public Works Department and Storm Water Utility are responsible for building and maintaining storm water detention/retention facilities, including landscaping with appropriate plant materials. The Parks Dept horticulturist/arborist is apparently not consulted. Parks Department is assessed by the Storm Water Utility for impervious surfaces within the parks system, but there seems to be little or no cooperative planning to utilize the parks to assist with storm water pollution reduction. Public Works street construction projects may result in removal of terrace trees; replacement trees are not required.

There has been no communication for several years between the Town of Algoma and the city for long range parks planning. We are not aware of on-going discussions between the County Parks Department and the City Parks Department.

Area Cooperation

The Parks Department concentrates on city facilities. While there is some cooperation with the school district relating to recreational activities, for the most part each entity maintains its own facilities. The city has little, if any, interaction with the towns or the county. The County Park, on County Highway Y, is located in the city but owned and maintained by the county. It is considered a regional park for the area, with 275 acres. Facilities include shelters, fields for various sports, a dog park and swimming beach. Fees are collected for various activities.

Winnebago County also maintains a second community park in Winneconne: Lake Winneconne Park, 28 acres on the lake with swimming, fishing, picnic and restroom facilities and a boat launch. It also manages four preservation nature areas, three with some amenities and one undeveloped, 269 acres in all. The county also maintains 21.5 miles of recreation trails as part of the multicounty Wiouwash Trail and tri-county Mascoutin Valley Trail. In addition, the county maintains 7 boat launches on the Winnebago system.

The towns immediately adjacent to Oshkosh include some county facilities, with the Town of Algoma the only town with its own personal investment in parks and a park plan. These consist of two small playlots, one at the Town Hall which is adjacent to a wooded area with grounds for an annual community picnic. Algoma also has 34 acres of undeveloped marsh and contributed both land and financial support to the Sheldon Nature Preserve managed by the school district. The Old Omro Road bike-hike lanes are scheduled to be connected to the Wiouwash Trail. Minor easements to connect future trails are in place. There are two small access points to the lake, neither of which has parking.. Algoma funds its park system through an impact fee of \$825 payable by all new residences before occupancy and with property taxes.

The Town of Algoma has a comprehensive plan which shows considerable trail and green space areas. It also has an up to date park ordinance and has considerable funds for parks. What it doesn't have is the will on the part of the Town Board for park development, nor, at the present time, any real park enthusiasts. A further barrier is Highway 21 which cuts the community in half. The Park Advisory Committee has recently hired a planner to inventory town owned land and possible areas for parks, and to submit ideas for crossing the highway.

The towns of Oshkosh, Black Wolf, Nekimi and Algoma are covered by state law mandating extraterritorial planning authority by the City of Oshkosh. The Town of Algoma and the City of Oshkosh have entered into a boundary agreement. The city has the ability to plan in the area of Algoma designated for annexation, opening up the potential for a regional park on the west side. Other towns are working with the city to develop similar boundary agreements

Parks Committee

Jan Scalpone, *Chair*

Tina Haffeman

Anne Hintz

Donna Lohry

Frankie Mengeling

Kathy Propp

Jeanne Shiras

Parks in the Oshkosh Area October 2009

Individual Parks Recommendations

Members of the LWV Winnebago County Parks Committee visited each city park in fall 2008. These recommendations come from observation, review of the 2003 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, and comparison with the 2002-2006 Capital Improvements Plan in that document. *Each park needs appropriate historic signage. Some parks have no signs at all.*

URBAN PARKS

Menominee Park

- Provide regular water testing and posting of results for beach
- Address the goose overpopulation issue
- Ramp up tree replacement
- Increase number of scheduled trash pick- ups for receptacles located just outside of Little Oshkosh
- Convert beach house into year round enclosed shelter (from 2003 Plan)
- Open shelter at Ames Point not appropriate. Other shelters in 2003 Plan may not be necessary.
- Plant natural shoreline vegetation wherever possible.
- Maintain open green space wherever possible.
- Observation tower not needed.

South Park

- Reinforce shoreline to prevent further erosion and provide a safety barrier
- Renovate water dam
- Construct new 20x40 open shelter with restrooms at east end of park (per 2003 plan)

DISTRICT PARKS

Rainbow Park

- Plant native vegetation buffer between skating rink and river
- Add clusters of bushes throughout to absorb water
- New boat launch and parking west of hockey rink would diminish green open space; however, there is high demand for these launch facilities.
- No fish cleaning stations or sanitary dump station for boaters without daily maintenance.

Red Arrow Park

- Upgrade the Frisbee golf course – better hole markers and signage for course layout. This golf course is heavily used.
- Do not place any additional intense uses at this park.
- Consider benches by play equipment and a few more picnic tables
- Upgrade parking lot on western edge (drainage is poor).

Riverside Park

- Pursue development of Lakes Education Center between Convention Center and new section of park
- No additional intensive uses needed. CIP had recommended skate park, large shelter, playground. Amphitheater has since been built.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

44th Parallel Park

- Consider changing the name
- Add restrooms
- Construct a new basketball court

Abbey Ave Park

- Mark and tend trails

Bauman Park

- New playground equipment
- Improvement of the softball diamond
- Landscaping
- Native plants along river to prevent runoff into river

Congress Ave Athletic Field/Tot Lot

- Create additional parking if possible without diminishing athletic field use.
- Install restrooms

East Hall

- Preserve the oak trees on the property
- Plant new trees on the perimeter, plus shrubs along the street for a softer look.
- Playground equipment in one corner.

Fugleberg Park and Boat Launch

- Space between boat launch and breakwater quite small for boats to maneuver.
- Park restrooms located at boat launch across busy S. Main St. from the park area.

Quarry Park: Do something. This park has been abandoned. Develop ball diamonds or soccer field and small playground on the most stable portion of land. If nothing else, build a walking/fitness trail. Consider capture of methane. Remove park shelter. Build restrooms if park is to be used.

Stevens Park

- Build restrooms
- Upgrade baseball diamond.

Stoegbauer Park

- Remove weeds from baseball infield; bring field up to standards.
- If porta potty is maintained, no need for permanent restrooms.

Teichmiller Park

- Advertise the park; it is a jewel, a model for neighborhood parks.

Westhaven Circle Park

- New signage with brief historical description of park

Mary Jewell Park (play lot)

- Fix baseball backstop.
- Install small play equipment area.
- Landscape the Oshkosh Ave boundary for gateway appeal

Mount Vernon Tot Lot (play lot)

- Place new signage that says the tot lot is a public play area; the lot appears to be private.

West Algoma Park

- Create a buffer of native water plants along the creek
- Improve landscaping, especially along Oshkosh Avenue.

SPECIAL PURPOSE PARKS

24th Ave boat launch

- Stripe the parking lot.
- Create handicapped access to path along breakwater.
- Enhance vegetative buffers along shore while maintaining access for shore fishing.
- Do not construct fish cleaning station without daily maintenance.

Bowen Street Fishing Dock

- Address parking problem. Consider lower railings.

Mill Street Boat Launch

- Too small for effective use

Al Brouillire Memorial Gardens

This is part of the Southshore Redevelopment Area and the proposed Riverwalk.

Garden Club: no recommendations

Hikers Monument: Excellent as is.

Lakeshore Municipal Golf Course

- Develop natural shoreline vegetative buffer to reduce runoff into Lake Butte des Morts and to discourage goose population.
- Continue to make improvements to golf hole layouts as feasible.

Abe Rochlin Park

- Create a river walk along the river and creek
- Create a buffer of native plants along creek and river

Roe Park

- The landscape plantings along Washington Avenue provide a buffer from traffic but they are overgrown and unattractive.

Killian Spanbauer Field

- Spruce up the corner with restrooms and bleachers plus the western fence line.
- Paint fencing or install new fencing (serviceable but rusted).

Carl Steiger Park

- Historic signage

William Steiger Park

- Repair and extend Riverwalk
- Provide new signage along walkway to identify William Steiger and provide history of old fishing shanties/railroad
- Develop rain gardens and additional vegetative buffers adjacent to public buildings to reduce runoff into river

CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION AREAS

Glatz Park

- Accessibility via South Main Street
- Smoother trails

Sawyer Creek Nature Preserve

- Signage is definitely needed to identify the park; there are signs indicating children crossing.
- Trail walkers could park in the school lot or on the city streets that abut the trail.
- Restroom not needed, but a shelter and benches would be a good idea.

North High Conservancy:

- Maintain this area in a natural state.
- Construct the detention pond in an environmentally sensitive manner to complement the nature preserve.

Campbell Creek Marsh

- Put in a buffer zone of native plants along the shore
- Provide signage that points out the value of this wetland within the city
- Perhaps an observation deck at the Knapp Street dead end.