

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

PORTAGE COUNTY PARKS



**PREPARED BY:
GARY SPECKMANN
PARK DIRECTOR
March 10, 2016**

INDEX

1. Our Purpose	page 3
2. Commission Members	page 4
3. Commission Meeting Highlights	page 4-6
4. Staff Roster	page 6-8
5. Area Inventory	
a. Lake Emily Park	page 8
b. Collins Park, Carrie Frost Park, Peterson Park	page 9
c. DuBay Park	page 10
d. Consolidated Parkway, Al Tech Park, Cate Park	page 11
f. Jordan Park	page 12
g. Standing Rocks Park	page 13-14
h. Becker Lake, Wolf Lake Park	page 15
i. Sunset Lake Park, Tomorrow River Wayside, Stedman Park	page 16
j. Lake Helen Park, Wisconsin River Rec Area	page 17
k. Galecke Park, Plover River Wayside County Cemetery	page 18
l. Meyer's Lake Boat Landing, Rhinehart Lake Boat Landing, Dewey Recreation Area	page 19-20
m. Tomorrow River Trail, Rocky Run Preserve	page 21
n. Mill Creek Preserve	page 21
o.. Lake Jacqueline Preserve, Steinhaugen	page 22
6. Other Projects/county Department Cooperation	page 23
7. New Projects Created	page 24
8. Table of County Parks	page 25
9. Park Facilities	page 26
10. Annual Report Highlights	page 27-28
11. Upcoming Year Projects/Capital Projects	page 29

OUR PURPOSE

In 2015, the County Parks Department continued to play an important role in the quality of life for Portage County residents. Parks are important for health, physical fitness, economic development, tourism, community vitality and of course, conservation.

Researchers have found that parks, recreation and open space amenities are ranked as one of the most important quality of life factors that people have identified. These areas have always been highly demanded by the citizens of Portage County. In fact the first county park, Lake Emily Park, was established in 1900 decades before there was a park commission or parks department.

Quality of life is an important determining factor for recruiting new businesses, business expansion and retaining employees. Businesses often select a location with a high quality of life, including parks, open space and easy access to the outdoors in order to compete for the highly trained, in-demand workers of the knowledge economy.

In addition, retirees are choosing communities to settle in that have high quality of life factors. Overall, communities that do not factor in the quality of life issues will lose out to ones that do.

Often overlooked is the value County Parks provide for tourism. Results from the most recent campground survey show that campers spent over \$650,000/year in Portage County while on their camping trips. This spending is significantly higher when other park users such as boaters, fishermen, skiers, bikers, lodge renters, Green Circle Trail users, snowmobilers, tournament participants, etc. are considered.

The Parks Department is staffed by 9.67 full time employees. In addition, 24 seasonal employees help make everything possible.

The Portage County Board of Supervisors established the Park Commission in 1935. The seven member Park Commission consists of four County Board Supervisors, whose term is subject to re-election every two years and three citizen members who serve seven year terms.

The achievements of the Portage County Parks Department would not be possible without the support of our staff, Park Commission, elected officials and the local community. It not only takes the involvement of everyone but also their foresight.

A Greek proverb says that "Societies become great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in."

Commission members serving during the period of this report are listed below in Table 1.

TABLE 1

NAME	APPOINTED	TERM EXPIRES	MEETINGS ATTENDED/HELD
Don Butkowski	2008	2016	10/12
Bo DeDeker	2012	2016	12/12
Mary Devine Giese	2000	2016	10/12
George Kraft	2008	2022	10/12
Eric Olson	2014	2019	11/12
Jeff Presley	2010	2016	12/12
Mike Wiza	2008	2015	4/5
Jim Gifford	2015	2016	3/4

MEETINGS HELD - The Park Commission held 12 regular meetings during the year. Minutes of these meetings are available at the Parks Department office.

REVIEW OF COMMISSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

January 8

The Commission approved the 2016-2021 Capital Improvements Plan that included a land acquisition adjacent to DuBay Park and continued improvements at Standing Rocks Park. Discussion was held on whether permanent seasonal campsites should be provided at county park campgrounds.

February 12

Snowmaking equipment bids were approved for the Standing Rocks Park ski hill project. A deer management plan for the county parks was presented by the director and the Commission approved a special deer gun hunt at Standing Rocks and authorized changing Wolf Lake Park and the Rocky Run Preserve to public hunting areas.

March 12

A medallion hunt event was discussed in the county parks in order to promote awareness of the parks. A goose deterrent plan was discussed with options on how to discourage geese from using parks in the summer.

April 9

The Commission examined the Lake Emily Park beach area to determine if the Nature Trek's concession stand request was viable. A county forest land designation and its benefits and costs was presented.

May 14

A UWSP student intern presented the Lake Emily and DuBay Park campground occupancy rates for 2014. The Commission denied the Nature Trek's concession stand proposal at Lake Emily.

June 11

Restricted covenants and naming rights for the Town of Sharon land acquisition were discussed with the sellers.

July 9

Restricted covenants and naming rights for the Town of Sharon land acquisition were approved. The Learn To Hunt deer hunting dates at Standing Rocks Park were approved (see Exhibit 1).



Exhibit 1. Learn to Hunt participant

August 13

The 2016 budget proposal was discussed.

September 10

The Commission met with the public at DuBay Park and discussed the possible land acquisition adjacent to the park and general park operations. The Commission agreed not to reimburse the DOT for engineering fees for the Tomorrow River Trail grant.

October 10

A bicycle pump track proposal was presented to the Commission. The presenters were instructed to pick a location at Standing Rocks, determine costs and who would pay for development and maintain the area and report back to the Commission.

November 12

Due to a rash of complaints regarding dog behavior at the Standing Rocks dog exercise area the Commission developed a policy to evict dogs permanently after offenses.

December 10

Corporation Counsel instructed the Park Commission that they would need to reimburse the DOT for engineering fees for the Tomorrow River Trail grant.

All changes for 2015 are in bold print.

STAFF ROSTER

The Portage County Parks Department employs 9.67 full time employees and many seasonal employees. The full-time employees at year end **2015** were as follows:

NAME	JOB TITLE	ANNIVERSARY DATE
vacant	Parks Maintenance Specialist	
Brzezinski, Jerry	Parks Foreman	1-79
Cychosz, Mickey	Parks Assistant	7-77
Felckowski, Dale	Maintenance Technician	1-04
Josh Nemec	Parks Specialist	3-14
Rose, Ryan	Assistant Director	5-07
Runke, Rex	Trails Coordinator	3-00
Speckmann, Gary	Parks Director	7-92
Trzebiatowski, Joe	Equipment Specialist	10-01
Vogel, Justin	Parks Specialist	9--13

2015 Seasonal positions included:

Maintenance crew

1 – 1078.75 hours
1 - 864 hours
1 - 562.75 hours
2505.5 hours

Collins Park

1 manager 764 hours
1 assistant manager 324 hours
1088 hours

The Collins Park staff also maintains Sunset Lake, Lake Helen Park and Peterson Park.

Jordan Park

1 manager	842.5 hours
1 assistant manager	598 hours
1 assistant manager	<u>384 hours</u>
	1824.5 hours

The Jordan Park staff also maintains Galecke Park, Consolidated Parkway, Al Tech Parkway and manages the Dewey Shooting Range during the summer along with full-time employees.

DuBay Park

1 manager	958 hours
1 assistant manager	571 hours
1 assistant manager	<u>557 hours</u>
	2086 hours

Lake Emily

1 manager	1016 hours
1 assistant manager	550 hours
1 assistant manager	546 hours
1 assistant manager	<u>521 hours</u>
	2633 hours

Standing Rocks

6 winter season ski hill aides	569.75 hours
1 summer park manager	1023 hours

Dewey Shooting Range

1 range master	169.5 hours
----------------	-------------

The shooting range is also staffed by the Jordan Park seasonal staff during the summer and full time staff in the fall on busy days.

Community Services Leader **31.5** hours

In 2011 the Parks Department created the Community Services Leader position who picked up inmates at the jail on weekends to provide a work crew during the fall performing all the work done previously by the Justice Program Community Service Crew which was eliminated in the 2011 budget. **In 2015 the community services leader was unable to receive any jail inmates and the program was stopped after the third weekend of no inmates. A total of 911 inmate work hours was provided in 2014.** They do meaningful work that the Parks Department hasn't had time to do or it frees them up to do other work. **For the first time since 2000 the Parks Department had to use seasonal and full time employees in 2015 to**

complete the work that jail inmates had been doing for no cost to the department.

Jail inmates and community service workers were used during the week by park staff when additional labor was needed. This work totaled **170.5 hours (299.5 hours in 2014)** and was valued at **\$5,642.**

Volunteers were also used during the year to assist with park maintenance. The Stevens Point Flying Disc Association provided volunteer work on the Standing Rocks Park disc golf course throughout the year. Point Pursuit provided individuals that performed work maintaining the Standing Rocks mountain bike trails. Both groups along with the SPASH mountain bike club and St Mary of Carmel Church provided volunteer work picking **almost 3,000 lbs** of garlic mustard at Standing Rocks Park under the invasive plant species control program.

AREA INVENTORY - The Portage County Parks Department manages 29 areas (including the Green Circle Trail) totaling over 2600 acres for outdoor recreation and natural resources management. A brief description of each area follows:

LAKE EMILY PARK – 186.7 acres

- A. Location - Old Highway 18, west of Amherst Junction.
- B. Date Acquired
 - 1935 Cate (county owned since 1900)
 - Miller (county owned since 1904)
 - 1941 Woyak
 - 1944 Lutz
 - 1947 Newby
 - 2001 Ward
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a campground, boat launching/fishing area, beach, picnic grounds, hiking area, historical site.
- D. Existing Facilities - 71 campground pads, three walk-in tent sites, rent-a-camp site, boat ramp, beach/changing stalls, electricity, two lodges, three shower buildings, 5 pit vault toilets, 5 wells, 2 playgrounds, picnic area, trails, baseball field, Native American burial site, handicap fishing pier, office, storage garage/workshop and two trailer dump stations.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – **Clearing for a new hiking trail connecting the north and south campgrounds began.**
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – The workshop/garage will have the interior remodeled to allow more storage.
- G. Future Goals – Campground expansion is planned for in the coming years west of the existing north campground.

COLLINS PARK – 31.1 acres

- A. Location - County Hwy I, 3 miles SW of Rosholt.
- B. Date Acquired
 - 1937 Kruzicki/Gliniecke
 - 1947 Richter
 - 1959 Omernick
 - 1966 Kaminski
 - 1973 Omernick
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a campground, boat launching/fishing area, beach, and picnic grounds.
- D. Existing Facilities - 28 campground pads, boat ramp, beach, electricity, shower building, lodge, flush toilet building, 1 pit vault toilet, 2 wells, fishing pier, playground, seasonal managers residence, picnic area, storage garage and trailer dump station.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current Facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for next year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future goals – Acquire adjacent land.

CARRIE FROST PARK – 6.9 acres

- A. Location - Co Hwy BB, 4 1/2 miles NW of Almond
- B. Date Acquired
 - 1940 Frost
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a roadside rest area and picnic grounds.
- D. Existing Facilities - Snowmobile shelter and picnic area.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

PETERSON PARK – 9 acres

- A. Location - Tree Lake Road, 5 miles north of Rosholt.

- B. Acquisition -
1946 Williams
1961, 67, 69 Danielson
1976 Town of Alban and Torun
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a boating/fishing area, beach, and picnic area.
- D. Existing Facilities - Boat ramp, beach, shelter, pit vault toilet, well, playground, picnic area.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Current goals are appropriate.

DUBAY PARK – 67.3 acres

- A. Location - Co Hwy E, 1 mile S of Dancy
- B. Date Acquired
1947, '65 Consolidated Water Power Co
1970 Rickford
1978 Sturm
1988 Gregory
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a campground, boat launching/fishing area, beach and picnic grounds.
- D. Existing Facilities - 31 campground pads, boat ramp, beach, electricity, lodge, two shower buildings, 4 pit vault toilets, 1 well, 2 playgrounds, seasonal manager's residence, picnic area, 1 ball field, handicap fishing pier, storage building and trailer dump station.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – **The ball field foul line fencing was removed.**
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – A small fishing parking lot will be built along Bridge Road. **Parking lot re-designs are being developed to relieve congestion. The Commission has decided to charge a boat launch fee at the park starting in 2016. Planning for the addition of up to five campsites will begin during the year.**
- G. Future Goals – Replacing other pit toilet buildings should be budgeted. Land acquisitions to expand the park should be considered. Negotiations for acquiring adjacent land are still ongoing.

CONSOLIDATED PARK – 12.5 acres

- A. Location - West River Drive, 1/2 mile south of Stevens Point.
- B. Date Acquired
1958 leased from Consolidated Water & Power
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a boat launching/fishing area and picnic grounds.
- D. Existing Facilities - Boat ramp, pit vault toilet and picnic area.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year - Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Replace pit toilet and build by boat landing.

AL TECH PARK – 2.9 acres

- A. Location - West River Drive, one mile south of Stevens Point.
- B. Date Acquired
1953 Leased from Kimberly Clark
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a canoe access/fishing area and picnic grounds.
- D. Existing Facilities - Canoe access, picnic area, and low head dam observation area.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year - Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Remove the old pit toilet building and construct a new one near the boat landing parking lot.

CATE PARK – 8.7 acres

- A. Location - Co Hwy A, 1/2 mile north of Amherst.
- B. Date Acquired
Managed since 1961 (county owned since 1899)
Ownership officially turned over to Commission in 1985

- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a picnic area and trailhead for the Tomorrow River State Trail.
- D. Existing Facilities - Picnic area, parking lot, trailhead.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - A bathroom and well will be needed for the trail.

JORDAN PARK – 397.6 acres

- A. Location - Hwy 66 and Co Hwy Y, 3 miles northeast of Stevens Point.
- B. Date Acquired
 - 1961 Wisconsin Public Service
 - 1968 Wisconsin Public Service
 - 1969 Larson
 - 1970 City of Stevens Point
 - 1972 Wisconsin Irrigation Leasing Corp
 - 1973 Stuller
 - 1974 Weronke
 - 1980 Greiten
 - 1982 DOT
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a campground, boat launching/fishing area, beach, picnic area, nature center, nature trails, historic site, administrative office, workshop and hydroelectric plant.
- D. Existing Facilities - 25 campsites, boat ramp, canoe access, beach, electricity, 2 lodges, 2 open shelters, shower building, 5 sets of pit vault toilets, 4 wells, 3 playgrounds, picnic area, trails, baseball field, nature center, hydroelectric plant, dam, 5 storage buildings, administrative office, maintenance facility, steel foot bridge, snowmobile bridge, and trailer dump station.

New Facilities or Improvements Added – **The new picnic area restroom was completed and construction of a new boardwalk for the canoe campsites began.**
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – **Finish the new canoe campsite boardwalk and tear down the old picnic area pit toilet.**
- G. Future Goals - Expand the campground to the west as a part of the long range plan, hire a consultant to conduct the required 2017 Jordan Dam inspection **and remove the picnic area garage and construct a new one at the maintenance facility area.**

STANDING ROCKS – 535.7 acres

- A. Location - Standing Rocks Road, six miles west of Amherst.
- B. Date Acquired
 - 1964 Kontry
 - 1965 Repinski
 - 1973 Laszewski
 - 1989 Acker
 - 1990 Repinski
 - 1992 Wolding
 - 1995 Schroeder
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a downhill ski and cross-country ski area, mountain bike and hiking area, archery course, boating/fishing area, public hunting area, picnic grounds, disc golf course, and dog exercise area.
- D. Existing Facilities - Lodge, ski shop, pit vault toilet, 3 ski tows, 5 downhill ski slopes, cross-country ski/hiking/biking trails, archery course, storage garage, disc golf course, cross country course and dog exercise area.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Invasive plant species control continued with **almost 3000** pounds of garlic mustard being pulled and removed from the park. Another 120 acres was sprayed for garlic mustard.
Snowmaking equipment was installed and operational by the end of the year. (See exhibits 2-5).



Exhibit 2. Pump house installation



Exhibit 4. Irrigation line



Exhibit 3. Irrigation line



Exhibit 5. One of three snow guns in operation

- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – The old lower ski tow building will be demolished and a smaller one built.
- G. Future Goals - Acquire more land to expand trails. Continue following the forest management plan that has the next tree harvest of 35 acres already scheduled. However the harvest should be delayed for five years. Also continue following the CIP list of improvements.

BECKER LAKE – 40 acres

- A. Location - Ellis Road, two miles north of Ellis
- B. Date Acquired
1964 Transferred from County to Park Commission
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a natural area and public hunting grounds.
- D. Existing Facilities - None
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added - Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year - Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

WOLF LAKE – 136.6 acres

- A. Location - Wolf Lake Road, 3 1/2 miles northwest of Blaine.
- B. Date Acquired
1964 Transferred from Highway Department
1978 Lempicki & Belter
- C. Current Management Practices – **The Park Commission changed the park to a public hunting area to encourage more use of the area.** Managed as a boat launching/fishing area and picnic area.
- D. Existing Facilities - Boat ramp, beach, pit vault toilet, well, picnic area, trails.
- E. New Facilities or Additions Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Continue cutting and spraying of box elder trees. Follow the forest management plan that calls for a second thinning of pines in 2020 and also consider harvesting hardwood areas not cut in 2012.

G. Future Goals – Acquire adjacent land.

SUNSET BEACH – 40 acres

A. Location - Sunset Lake Road - 5 miles north of Nelsonville.

B. Date Acquired

2005 North New Hope Lutheran Congregation (previously leased since 1965)

C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a beach area.

D. Existing Facilities - Beach/changing stalls, shelter, two sets of pit vault toilets, well, playground, picnic area.

E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.

F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.

G. Future Goals – The pit toilet buildings will need to be replaced.

TOMORROW RIVER WAYSIDE – 1 acre

A. Location – Rolling Hills Rd, 1 1/ 2 miles northwest of Nelsonville.

B. Date Acquired

1967 Transferred to Park Commission

C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a fishing access.

D. Existing Facilities - None

E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.

F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.

G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

STEDMAN PARK – 3 acres

A. Location - Co Hwy D, 6 miles south of Amherst

B. Date Acquired

1968 Transferred from Conservation Committee

C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a fishing access and picnic area.

- D. Existing Facilities - Picnic area
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added - Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

LAKE HELEN PARK – 10.6 acres

- A. Location - Lake Helen Road, 3 1/2 miles east of Rosholt
- B. Date Acquired
 - 1970 Gilmeister
 - 1970 Town of Alban
 - 1973 Stanislawski
 - 1974 Ferg
 - 1981 Stanislawski
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a boating/fishing area, beach, and picnic area.
- D. Existing Facilities - Boat ramp, beach, pit vault toilet, well, playground, picnic area, picnic shelter, horseshoe pit, volleyball court.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

WISCONSIN RIVER RECREATION AREA – 77.2 acres

- A. Location - Park Road, 8 miles north of Stevens Point.
- B. Date Acquired
 - 1969, '71 Omernick
 - 1975 Consolidated Water Power Co
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a fishing/hunting area.
- D. Existing Facilities – Parking lot
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Continue planning for future campground and park development.

GALECKE PARK – 33.2 acres

- A. Location - River Drive 1 1/2 miles west of Plover.
- B. Date Acquired
1976 Village of Plover
1979 Galecke
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a boating/fishing area and picnic area.
- D. Existing Facilities - Boat ramp, boat dock, open shelter, pit vault toilet, picnic area.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next year – **The Park Commission has decided to charge a boat launch fee at the park starting in 2016.**
- G. Future Goals – Current goals are appropriate.

PLOVER RIVER WAYSIDE – 0.3 ACRES

- A. Location - Hwy K, 7 miles northeast of Stevens Point.
- B. Date Acquired
1984 transferred from County
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a canoe access.
- D. Existing Facilities - None
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added - Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year - Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

PORTAGE COUNTY CEMETERY – 1 acre

- A. Location - Lake Road, 1 mile north of Amherst Junction
- B. Acquisition
1984 transferred from Conservation Committee
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a county cemetery.

- D. Existing Facilities - Iron boundary fence.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added - Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year - Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

MEYERS LAKE – 0.5 acres

- A. Location - Lake Meyers Road, one mile east of Amherst Junction.
- B. Date Acquired
1984 Transferred from Conservation Committee
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a boating/fishing access.
- D. Existing Facilities - Primitive boat ramp.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added - Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year - Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Current goals are appropriate.

RINEHART LAKE – 1.5 acres

- A. Location - South Lake Road, 3 miles north of Nelsonville.
- B. Date Acquired
1984 Transferred from Conservation Committee
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a boating/fishing access.
- D. Existing Facilities - Primitive boat ramp
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added - Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year - Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals - Current goals are appropriate.

DEWEY RANGE – 319 acres

- A. Location - Willow Springs Drive, 5 miles north of Stevens Point.

- B. Acquisition
1984 Transferred from Conservation Committee
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a gun shooting range and public hunting area.
- D. Existing Facilities - Range office, 50, 100 and 200 yard ranges, archery range and pit vault toilet.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – **A ten station archery range was constructed (see Exhibit 6) and the town road was re-surfaced by the City of Stevens Point as payment for using the law enforcement shooting range.**



Exhibit 6. Deer platform at archery range

- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Encourage the DNR forester to implement the forest management plan that had harvesting occurring on 49 acres in 2010 and hand gun range will be constructed.
- G. Future Goals – Expanding hours should be considered.

TOMORROW RIVER STATE TRAIL – 180 acres

- A. Location - Plover to Waupaca County Line
- B. Date Acquired 1997 Leased from Wisconsin DNR
- C. Current Management Practices - Managed as a recreation trail.
- D. Existing Facilities - Fourteen miles of crushed limestone trail, parking lots at Custer Road, Amherst Junction and Cate Park and a 14 mile off-grade horse trail.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Additions or Improvements Planned for Next Year – Continue design for Hwy KK crossing in Amherst Junction and trail connector to Alm Rd.
- G. Future Goals - Continue development as outlined in the Master Plan.

ROCKY RUN PRESERVE – 84 acres

- A. Location – Rocky Run/Little Chicago Roads, ¼ mile west of Stevens Point
- B. Acquisition
2005 Stora Enso North America
- C. Current Management Practices – Managed as a “green space” preserve **and public hunting area.**
- D. Existing Facilities – None
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – **The Park Commission changed the area to a public hunting area to encourage more use of the preserve.**
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Current goals are appropriate.

MILL CREEK PRESERVE – 124 acres

- A. Location - Co Hwy O, 11/2 miles southeast of Junction City
- B. Date Acquired
2010 Donation from Central Wisconsin Community Foundation
- C. Current Management Practices – Managed as a public hunting area and “green space” area.

- D. Existing Facilities – Parking lot.
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current Facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Continue wetland restoration and tree plantings.

LAKE JACQUELINE PRESERVE – 22 acres

- A. Location – Co Hwy J, 6 miles northwest of Rosholt
- B. Date Acquired
2011 Kulas
- C. Current Management Practices – Managed as a “green space” preserve.
- D. Existing Facilities – None
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – Current facilities are adequate.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – Nothing at this time.
- G. Future Goals – Current goals are adequate

STEINHAUGEN – 270 acres

- A. Location – Bentley Rd, 7 miles northeast of Stevens Point
- B. Date Acquired
2015 Olson
- C. Current Management Practices – Managed as a “green space” preserve and public hunting area.
- D. Existing Facilities – 12 car parking lot and trails
- E. New Facilities or Improvements Added – A 12 car parking lot was constructed and boundaries posted.
- F. Improvements or Additions Planned for Next Year – A developed trail system will be constructed for hiking, fat tire winter biking and snowshoeing. A cross country ski trail will be built in the future when the need exists.
- G. Future Goals – Manage the unique natural resources and continue managing as a silent sport area.

OTHER PROJECTS

Green Circle Trail – The County does all the routine maintenance, storm damage cleanup and enforcement on the 24 mile trail except in city parks and Schmeeckle Reserve. Approximately 126,500 visitors use the trail annually.

Snowmobile Trail Program – Portage County currently contracts with **ten** snowmobile clubs for trail maintenance. The Governor’s Snowmobile Council approved funding (\$72,725) for the maintenance of 290.9 miles of trail for the 2014-2015 season.

Cross Country Ski Trail Grooming - The Parks Department grooms approximately ten miles of ski trails at Standing Rocks. In addition, the department continues to manage, maintain, and groom the Plover River Ski Trail at the city well fields.

Land Preservation Fund Committee (LPFC) – A Park Commission representative and the parks director are members of the LPFC that was created in 2004 for the purpose of protecting open spaces and outstanding natural features in Portage County. **During 2015 the Fund assisted in the purchase of the seven acre park acquisition for Junction City and the 270 acre Portage County Parks Department Steinhaugen acquisition in the Town of Sharon.**

COUNTY DEPARTMENT COOPERATION

This was the **fifth** year that the job sharing with the Highway Department has occurred. The two maintenance technicians from the Parks Department are transferred to the Highway Department starting in late November through the end of March.

The Parks Department mows grass, sprays weeds, cuts dead trees and plows snow at the sheriff’s department law enforcement range and provides an annual location for Land Conservation to store and sort trees.

The Parks Department and Facilities Department continue to share manpower and equipment for projects when needed.

NEW PROJECTS CREATED DURING THE YEAR

The fundraising for the Standing Rocks Park snowmaking project was completed early in the year. The cooling pond and well were constructed in early summer. The irrigation lines and electrical components were installed in early fall. The pump house was constructed in late fall. Unfortunately mild temperatures and high humidity for almost all of December delayed snowmaking but it began in full by the last week of December.

The Dewey Recreation Area field archery course was completed and opened during the summer.

Three individuals from the Department of Natural Resources master naturalist program volunteered at the Jordan Park nature center during summer weekends. It was the first time the center was open during the summer since the summer naturalist position was eliminated from the budget in 2012. It is anticipated that this program will continue in 2016. Park staff also conducts programs when time permits.

TABLE OF COUNTY PARKS

NAME	TOWNSHIP	ACREAGE
Becker Lake	Sharon	40
Cate Park	Amherst	6.9
Collins Park	Alban	48.2
Consolidated Park	Linwood	12.5
County Cemetery	Amherst	1
Dewey Range	Dewey	319
DuBay Park	Eau Pleine	85
Frost Park	Almond	8.7
Galecke Park	Plover	33.2
Jordan Park	Hull	397.6
Lake Jacqueline Preserve	Sharon	22
Lake Emily Park	Amherst	177.7
Lake Helen Park	Alban	10.6
Meyers Lake	Amherst	.5
Mill Creek Preserve	Carson	124
Peterson Park	Alban	9
Plover River Wayside	Sharon	.3
Rinehart Lake	New Hope	1.5
Rocky Run Preserve	Linwood	84
Standing Rocks Park	Stockton	557
Stedman Wayside	Lanark	3
Steinhaugen	Sharon	270
Sunset Beach	New Hope	40
Tech Park	Linwood	3
Tomorrow River State Trail	Plover, Stockton, Amherst	180 (14 miles)
Tomorrow River Wayside	New Hope	2.7
Wisconsin River Park	Dewey	85
Wolf Lake Park	Almond	<u>111</u>
		2634.4

PARK FACILITIES AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Portage County Parks provides a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities and facilities. A listing follows:

1. Beaches (8)
2. Picnic Areas (14)
3. Boat Launching Sites (11)
4. Enclosed Shelters (7) (Rentals)
5. Open Shelters (4)
6. Downhill skiing (Rentals available)
7. Cross Country Ski Trails (16 Miles)
8. Snowmobile Trails (292 Miles)
9. Nature Center
10. Self Guided Nature Trail
11. Camping Areas (4)
12. Archery Range
13. Shooting Range
14. Fishing, Power Boating, Sail boating, Water skiing
15. Fitness Trail
16. Playgrounds (7 Parks)
17. Softball Diamond (DuBay Park)
18. Sandlot Diamonds (2)
19. Horseshoe Pits (7)
20. Historical Sites (2)
21. Public Hunting (**8** Areas)
22. Mountain Bike (10 miles double track and 13 miles single track)
23. Recreation Trail (14 miles)
24. Dog Exercise Area
25. Horseback Riding (14 miles)
26. Dog Sledding (17 Miles)
27. Disc Golf Course (33 holes)
28. Volleyball courts (7)
29. Hydroelectric Plant
30. Cross Country Running course
31. Snowshoe course

ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Camping – The **\$246,136** from camping revenues was a **13% increase from 2014 and surpassed the previous 2013 all-time high by 9%**. A total of **39,882** people camped at County parks in **2015**.

Approximately 30% of all registered campers reside in Portage County, 64% reside in other Wisconsin counties and 6% reside in other states. According to recent campground surveys, these campers spent over \$650,000 at Portage County businesses while on their trip.

Firewood - Sales totaled **\$15,690** which was **the highest ever surpassing the 2014 all-time record by over 17%**.

Lodge rentals - The **\$34,018** total was **third to the record established in 2010**. A total of **19,077** people attended **the 261** lodge rentals at county parks in **2015**.

Skiing – The Standing Rocks downhill opened in **2014-2015** for its **49th** year and was open for **8 days**. The average length of past seasons has been 19 days. A total of **831** cross country skiers and **546** downhill skiers visited the park during the winter. Winter revenues totaled **\$11,902** which was **205% lower than the previous year..**

Other Standing Rocks Park Revenues – In addition to winter recreation revenues and lodge rentals the park provides a number of other activities where user fees are generated. The main ones include disc golf, dog exercise and mountain biking. In **2015** the disc golf course generated **\$13,046** in user fees. This was **\$168 less than the 2014 total which was the third highest total. Revenues (\$9,016) for the dog park increased for the first time in six years.** Annual revenues have decreased about 25% since 2010 when the city built their free dog park. Mountain biking generated **\$4,443** in trail fees for **2015 which was \$143 less than 2014..**

Cross Country Course – The running course created at Standing Rocks Park in 2011 continues to be popular. **Close to 80** high schools and middle schools with **approximately 1500** students participated in the cross country meets. **Approximately 2,000 spectators attended the school events.** In addition approximately **65** runners participated in the *Point Cross Country Challenge* fundraising event.

Jordan Park Nature Center – The nature center **opened for the first time since 2012 and was staffed by volunteers for 16 weekend days for a total of 250 hours.** Park staff and other volunteers continue sporadic programming when requested and some campground programs are still conducted when time allows (see Exhibit 7).



Exhibit 7. Park staff conducting nature program

Dewey Shooting Range - The range completed its **29th** full season this year. A total of **2,099** shooters used the range during the year. Range numbers have **averaged 2,115** for the past five years. In addition, the sheriff's department and hunter safety courses used the range and adjacent law enforcement range.

Total range revenue was **\$12,618 which shattered the previous revenue record by 17.3%.**

TOTAL parks department revenues for calendar year **2015** were **the second highest ever at \$367,450** which was **only \$2400 lower than the all-time record high established in 2013.**

Copies of the detailed Camping, Skiing and Shooting Range Annual Reports are available at the Parks Office for further review.

PROJECTS PLANNED FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

Acquisitions

The Park Commission is very interested in the acquisition of property in the Plover River corridor and property adjacent to existing county parks.

Negotiations for land adjacent to DuBay Park are ongoing.

Forestry Management

The department **still needs to** become more active in forestry management. The tree quality needs to be increased and wildlife habitat improved in most of the county park woodlands. Tree quality either was poor when the land was purchased or has been neglected over the years. Oak, aspen and white pine areas can be improved by creating two acre clear cut areas where the trees are in poor quality. Removing poor quality trees and allowing sunlight to the forest floor will encourage new seedlings to re-generate the area. Wood from these clear cuts will be sold for campground firewood or be used to heat park department buildings and save on LP costs. This will be a slow process, one to two clear cuts each year, but it needs to begin now at Jordan Park, Standing Rocks, DuBay Parks with other park areas to follow.

Winter staffing

In order for the department to fulfill its mission and provide the services that the public requests the two maintenance employees who have been working at the Highway Department for the past five winters need to return to full time Parks employment.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

Designing of the Tomorrow River State Recreation Trail connector in Amherst Junction **was completed in 2015. Negotiations with landowners are ongoing** with final completion of the trail across County Rd KK still being a goal after years of delays.

Construction of ski hill improvements, a multi-use lodge and a tubing hill at Standing Rocks are still being planned for. The Friends of Standing Rocks may begin a new fundraising campaign for this project.

Construction of a handgun range should be completed during the year at the Dewey Shooting Range. A DNR grant will be used to fund this project.

A copy of the **2015** budget is available for review at the Parks Department office.