

TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

The 3 photographs below were taken at/near Vanderbilt Park



TCP&R



LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

MASTER PLAN 2023-2027

Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Planning Partners

Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission

Robert McKay – Chair

Terri Lynn Eden – Vice Chair

Megan Rule - Member

Steven Escott - Member

Paul Newby - Member

Tuscola County Board of Commissioners Liaison: Kim Vaughan

Tuscola County Road Commission Liaison: Julie Matuszak

Tuscola County Planning Commission Liaisons: Cynthia Kapa, Lonnie Kester, Rick Boylan

Tuscola County Drain Commission Liaisons: Bob Mantey, Dara Hood, Alicia Little

Tuscola County Controller

Clayette Zechmeister

Tuscola County Board of Commissioners

District 1 – Tom Young

District 2 – Thomas Bardwell

District 3 – Kim Vaughan

District 4 – Douglas DuRussel

District 5 – Dan Grimshaw

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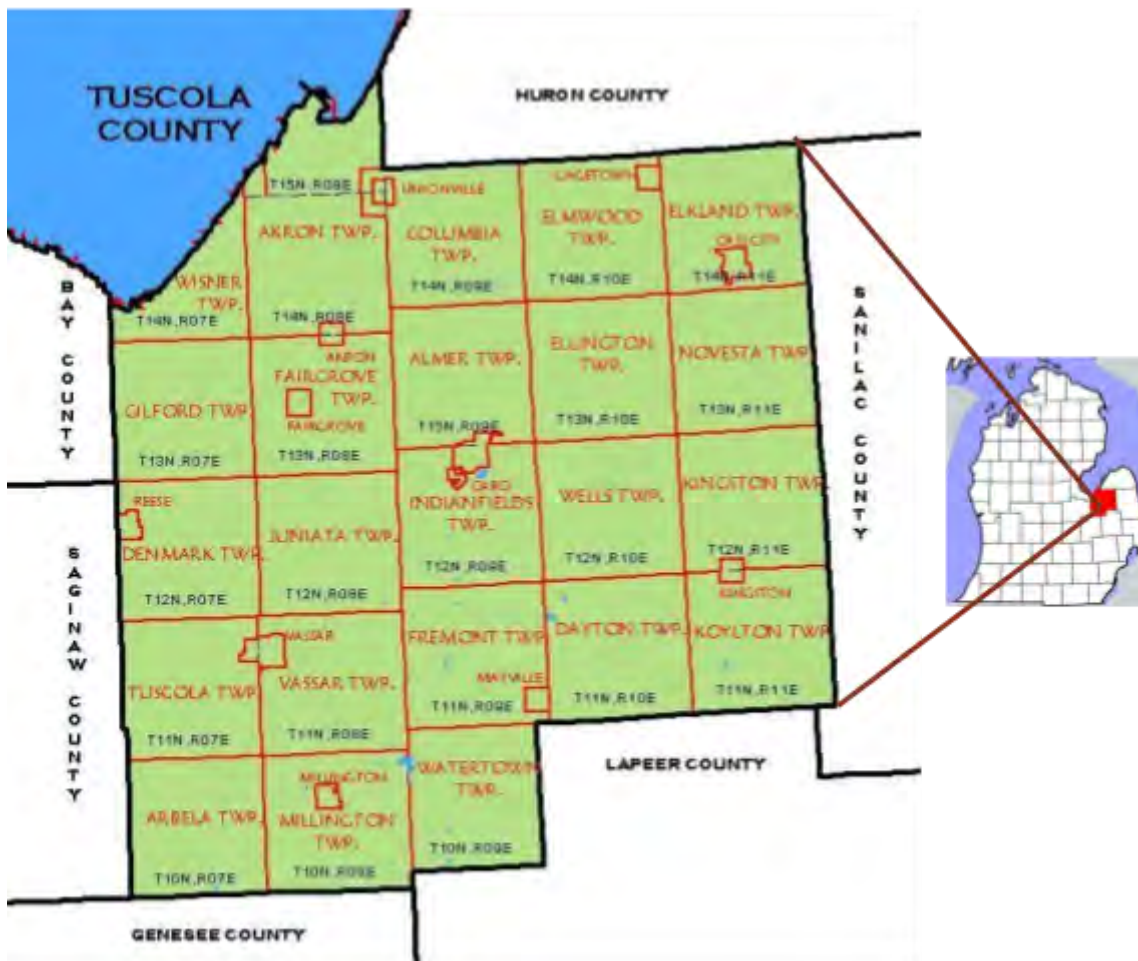
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Our Vision

The Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission has developed this 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 2017 – 2021.” 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 greenway 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.

Map - Tuscola County, Michigan



Community Description

Tuscola County is located in the southwestern portion of the greater thumb region of Michigan, with a portion of coastline along Saginaw Bay.

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 communities of Ashmore, Bay Park, Bradleyville, Colling, Colwood, Dayton, Deford, Denmark Junction, East Dayton, and Ellington, 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 state highways of Tuscola County are M-15, M-24, M-25, M-46, M-81, and M-138. Flint, Saginaw and Bay City are within a short driving distance.

The county's population is 53,323 (2020) with a household median income of \$49,988 (2019) according to estimates by the US Census Bureau.

Local events include the Tuscola County Fair, Tuscola County Pumpkin Festival, Michigan Bean Festival, Caro Winterfest, Caro Cars & Crafts Fest, Octagon Barn Fall Family Days, Mid Michigan Renaissance Festival Enchanted Forest, Vassar River Fest, Murphy Lake Pike Pull, Cass City Freedom Festival, Mayville Sunflower Festival, Millington Old Fashion Summer Festival, and the Unionville Summer Fest along with their Ball Tournament Weekend. Caro, Akron, Cass City, Unionville, and Vassar all host farmer's markets. Caro, Cass City, and Vassar all host a summer concert series/music in the park events.

Tuscola's rich agricultural heritage is reflected in its array of agritourism destinations and family farms including the Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum, Kohl Farms, Pennell Farms, Zwerk & Sons Farms, Szczygiel's Plant Farm, Fawn Valley Tree Farm, McDaniel Farms, Clearwater Farms/Findlay's Organics, Sheardy's Greenhouse, Will's Greenhouse, the Andrus Family Farm Produce Stand, the Miller Family Orchard, and Turner's Blueberry Farm, among others. Made in Tuscola County agricultural products include: Mapleworxz and Battel's Sugar Bush. Making life sweeter since 1906, Caro is home to a Michigan Sugar sugarbeet processing plant... locally grown, locally owned. Poet Bioprocessing, also located in Caro, produces 53 million gallons of ethanol annually. Ethanol production by POET Bioprocessing - Caro consumes approximately 18 million bushels of corn from the region and provides not only an environmentally friendly fuel, but also a valuable high quality livestock feed for local, regional and national markets. Quality Roasting, Inc. located in Gilford Township is a soybean processing plant with the capacity to process about 2.2 million pounds of soybeans a year. Tuscola County produces about 3.67 million bushels of soybeans annually.

Among the county's attractions are the Cass River, Baja Acres Motocross Park, over 55 local barn owners have joined the Thumb Quilt Trail, Thumb Area Center for the Arts, the Richard C. Burtis House, Murphy Lake, and the Southern Links Trailway, a 10-mile rail trail that connects the communities of Columbiaville, Otter Lake, and Millington in central Michigan. While the trail is paved with smooth asphalt, an adjacent path is offered for equestrian users.

There are several sites in Tuscola County listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places. And Tuscola County is home to numerous historical societies and museums including: Thumb Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum, Caro Roadhouse Museum & Historical Society, Millington-Arbela Historical Society & Museum, Kingston Depot & Museum, Vassar Historical Society & Museum, Mayville Museum, and the Watrousville-Caro Area Historical Society & Museum. The region is also known for their restoration of historic theaters: Cass Theatre, Strand Theatre, and the Vassar Theatre. Caro, Cass City, Fairgrove, Fostoria, Mayville, Millington, Reese, Unionville and Vassar are all home to a public library.

The county's shoreline along Saginaw Bay is part of the Tip of the Thumb Heritage Water Trail. This trail can be navigated with small non-motorized boats such as kayaks, canoes, rafts and/or rowboats.

Flowing through Tuscola County, the Cass River Water Trail meanders for 37.5 miles, featuring 13 canoe/kayak launch sites evenly spaced along the route. The trail begins upstream of Vassar where Highway M-46 crosses the Cass River. The water trail follows the river downstream through Vassar, Tuscola, Frankenmuth, Bridgeport and ends at Wickes Park on the Saginaw River. Paddlers will encounter diverse paddling experiences, ranging from rural & natural areas to small towns. Rentals are available at Sivak's Cass River Boat And Tube Rental.

Camping can be done at the county-owned Vanderbilt Park, as well as at private campgrounds: Krystal Lake Campground, Ber-Wa-Ga-Na Campground and Wesleyan Woods.

Local legends near Vanderbilt Park include Indian Dave, Jenny the beer drinking bear, and Stair Tree. Legend has it Tuscola County may also be home to a Cass River sasquatch.

Other recreational activities include disc golf courses, archery & shooting range clubs, community pools and splash pads, bowling alleys, and private golf courses.

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.

The vision of the Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission is to establish Tuscola County as a destination location to further enhance Tuscola County's sense of place. Tuscola County, love where you live.

Legends, Folklore, and Historical Significance

From lostinmichigan.net and thumbwind.com, meet Tuscola County's infamous beer drinking bear named Jenny:



From mlive.com



Make a quick stop in Quanicassee

With a name of Native American origin that means "lone tree," it would be appropriate to stop in Quanicassee and visit what we call the Stair tree.

Knotted and twisted, the fully-grown tree resembles a set of stairs with branches at extreme angles providing a perfect spot for a photo. It can be found in [Vanderbilt County Park](#), which offers campsites and a picnic pavilion near Saginaw Bay for those looking to linger for awhile.

The Mighty Oak Tree

by Johnny Ray Ryder, Jr.

A mighty wind blew night and day,
It stole the oak tree's leaves away;
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark
Until the oak was tired and stark.

But still the oak tree held its ground
While other trees fell all around;
The weary wind gave up and spoke.
"How can you still be standing Oak?"

The oak tree said, "I know that you
Can break each branch of mine in two,
Carry every leaf away,
Shake my limbs, and make me sway.

But I have roots stretched in the earth,
Growing stronger since my birth;
You'll never touch them, for you see,
They are the deepest part of me.

Until today, I wasn't sure
Of just how much I could endure,
But now I've found, with thanks to you,
I'm stronger than I ever knew."



Taken from The County Press and lostinmichigan.net, meet the legendary Tuscola County local native, Indian Dave.



From Michael Hardy at thumbwind.com



“The Cass River passes through what was a thickly populated Indian district lying east of Saginaw. Down the stream, according to archeological evidence, the Indians brought hundreds of chert nodules from which they made arrow points, knives, and other edge tools. The Flint River nearly parallels the Cass into the Thumb and was used extensively in Indian commerce.” This area was documented in the 1831 novel “A Fortnight in the Wilderness” by Alexis de Tocqueville.

From local historian, Mark Putnam:

Cass River was called Not-a-way-sebe, meaning a black peculiar snake, now extinct, on that river.

A photo from tuscolatoday.com showing a being crossing what reportedly is the Cass River, near M-46 and the Vassar State Game Area in Tuscola County. A sasquatch? Bigfoot?



Giving the historical and beautiful Cass River a helping hand

10/17/2019

1 Comment

By Tom Lounsbury

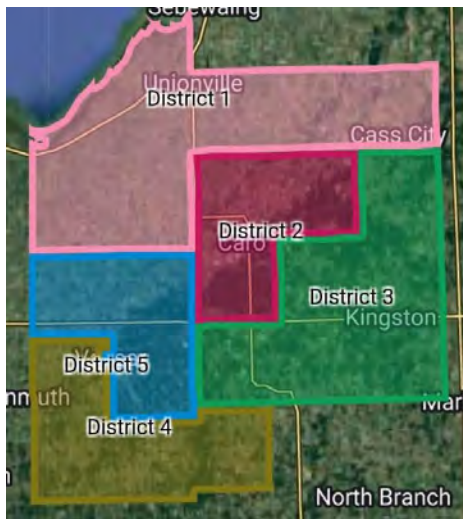
Formed by a glacier eons ago, the Cass River meandering westerly through Michigan’s Thumb possesses its share of history. It was a major travel corridor through an immense wilderness for various Native American tribes for countless centuries, of which is testified by the Petroglyphs located on the banks of the Cass’s North Branch in Sanilac County, that remains a sacred place for Native Americans to this day.

This River was named in honor of General Lewis Cass for the signing of the Treaty of Saginaw with Native Americans along its banks on September 24, 1819 (exactly 200 years ago), which ceded more than six million acres in Michigan’s Lower Peninsula. The Cass River would play a major role in the transformation of the Thumb with the early municipalities of Bridgeport, Frankenmuth, Tuscola, Vassar, Caro and Cass City owing their creation and development to being located near its banks. A whole lot of logs were also floated down the Cass River during the lumbering era to help supply the needs of a new and fast growing country, as well as it was used to power early lumber and grain mills.

During the mid-19th Century, the Thumb wilderness was a well known Mecca for hunters seeking bear, deer and most notably, elk. The Cass River was the main access in reaching the hunting grounds which were located well upstream with the “Forks” being the hotspot (where the North Branch and South Branch join together to become one just south of Cass City, hence the name Elkland Township that the Village is located in). A good book which documents this is “The Hunting Expeditions of Oliver Hazard Perry”, who wrote about his hunts and adventures near the Cass River in the great Thumb wilderness (during which he shot an enormous 8x8 bull elk).

Administrative Structure

Map - 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 are:

- Commissioner Tom Young - District 1
- Commissioner Thomas Bardwell - District 2
- Commissioner Kim Vaughan - District 3
- Commissioner Douglas DuRussel - District 4
- Commissioner Dan Grimshaw - District 5

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 Parks 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:

Robert McKay – Chair

Terri Lynn Eden – Vice Chair

Megan Rule - Member

Steven Escott - Member

Paul Newby - Member

Tuscola County Board of Commissioners Liaison: Kim Vaughan

Tuscola County Road Commission Liaison: Julie Matuszak

Tuscola County Planning Commission Liaisons: Cynthia Kapa, Lonnie Kester, Rick Boylan

Tuscola County Drain Commission Liaisons: Bob Mantey, Dara Hood, Alicia Little

The mission of the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission is to advise the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners on matters of policy and practice pertaining to the encouragement, establishment, and provision of recreational opportunities for residents of, and visitors to, Tuscola County.

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. 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 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 local, 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. The County of Tuscola is dedicated to improving park and recreational offerings in Tuscola County.

Community Support:

Community volunteers are such a treasured and valued asset for public park and recreation space in Tuscola County. A local group of volunteers created and developed the park sign and garden surrounding it at the Vanderbilt County Park and Campground:



A beautiful park bench memorial donated to Vanderbilt Park and Campground in memory of a beloved community member, next to the infamous old oak "Stair Tree".



Community Partnerships:

Tuscola Intermediate School District
A commitment to serve...a promise to educate



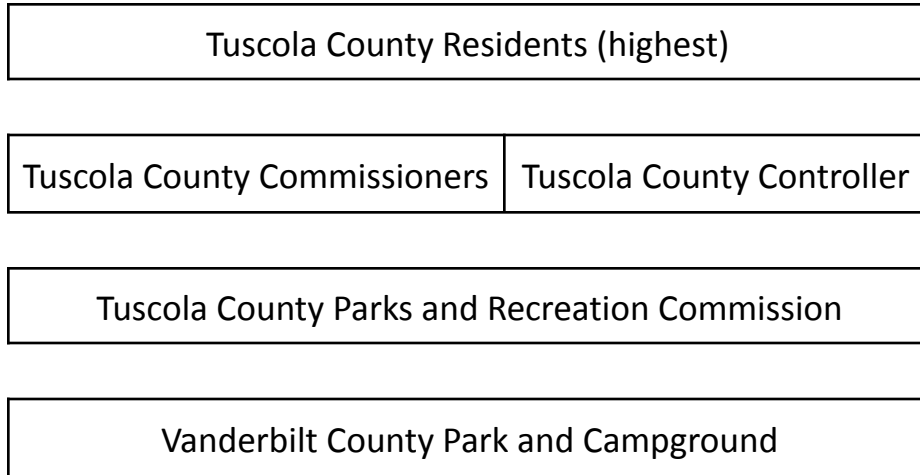
Tuscola County Park & Recreation Community Partners

- Cass River Greenway is an effort by a group of local volunteers, assisted by professional resources and municipal leaders, working to enhance recreational opportunities and the environmental well-being of the Cass River Corridor.
- Friends of the Southern Links Trailway is an effort by a group of local volunteers, assisted by professional resources and municipal leaders, working to enhance the 10.2 mile rail trail that connects the communities of Columbiaville, Otter Lake, and Millington.
- The Tuscola County ISD has assisted with park & recreational marketing material.
- Mission 1 Apparel hosts the Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Online Store.



Authoritative Structure:

The authoritative structure of Parks and Recreation in Tuscola County is shown below:



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.

Recreation Inventory

Vanderbilt County Park and Campground

Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is located alongside Saginaw Bay in the northwestern portion of Tuscola County in the township of Wisner, in close proximity to the Quanicassee River and Bay County, and is within the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Vanderbilt County Park and Campground was donated to Tuscola County by the late Frank and Amelia Vanderbilt in 1938. 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, restrooms, municipal water, a dump station, fire rings, and 24 improved and 8 rustic campsites. The Park and Campground also offers a horseshoe pit, outdoor lighting, a volleyball net, and park benches. Vanderbilt County Park and Campground is open year around.





Aerial View of Tuscola County's Vanderbilt County Park and Campground

Vanderbilt Park

4446 Bath Road, Fairgrove, MI 48733

*Tuscola County's Hidden Gem
with 18 acres of natural scenic beauty*



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.



Tuscola County Park and Recreation Asset Inventory

Below, please find the list of our treasured assets here in Tuscola County:

Village of Akron

- Akron Park



Township of Almer

- Almer Township Hall (Darbee School)
- Darbee Farm Park
- AYSO Soccer Park
- Darbee Park



Arbela 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



Cass River at Chippewa Landing



Village of Cass City

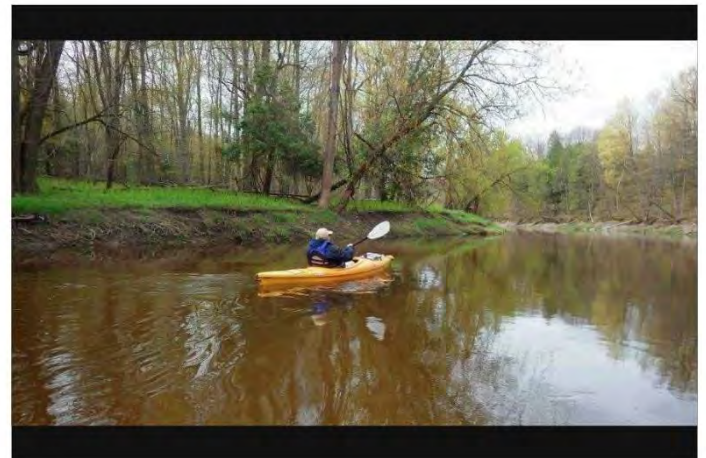
- Recreational Park
- Northwood Park
- Railway Walking Park
- Rotary Park



Thank You

Cass City Splash Park

<p>Village Council Dan Delamarter, Village President Don Ball, Village Trustee Tom Herron, Village Trustee Mick Kinn, Village Trustee Joe Leeson, Village Trustee Robert Piaskowski, Village Trustee Jenny Zawilinski, Village Trustee</p> <p>Monetary Donations Bert & Holly Althaver Kevin & Jean Anthony Paul & Suzanne Chappel Tom & Linda Herron Jim & Debra Kranz David & Kristine Milligan Surendra & Nancy Raythatha Kelly & Kelly Smith Benjamin & Kathryn Varney</p> <p>Volunteers Don Ball Dan Delamarter Bill Harris Jason Klein Matt Klein Robert Piaskowski Jim Walmsley</p>	<p>Project Manager Tom Herron, Village Trustee</p> <p>Village Manager Debbie Powell</p> <p>Grants Pinney Foundation Dr. Edward & Dorothy Scollon Family Foundation Fund</p> <p>Memorials Geraldine Corcoran in Memory of Michael Corcoran</p> <p>Businesses "Green Thumb Hydroseeding, Inc." "Martin Electric, Inc." "Northwood Modular Homes, Inc." R & R Concrete & Supply "Superior 1, Inc." Tuckey - Sebawing Concrete Products Walther Farms</p> <p>DPW / Parks Staff Dennis McCabe Jeremy Russell Al Dadacki Tom Peruski Ed Nizzola Jeff Wills Bob O'Dell</p>
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2 of 3

Larry Kolb of Cass City heads out in his kayak from Evergreen Park in Sanilac County, to begin a reconnoiter of the Upper Reaches of the Cass River. (Tom Lounsbury/Hearth Michigan)

Village of Fairgrove

- Fairgrove Community Park
- Mulberry Park



(Image of the Michigan Bean Festival building near Mulberry Park in Fairgrove, MI which hosts the Michigan Bean Festival every Labor Day weekend)

Village of Gagetown

- Village Park



(Image of the Octagon Barn near Gagetown, MI which hosts the Fall Family Days festival every September)

Township of Gilford

- Gilford Township Park

Township of Indianfields

- Indianfields Township Park



Indianfields Township is the largest township of Tuscola County in the U.S. state of Michigan. 39% of the township is state land available to the public to hunt, fish and explore. With a population just above 2,600 people, Indianfields Township is located in the county seat of Caro.

The city of Caro is located in the northern portion of Indianfields Township. The Caro post office, with ZIP code 48723, also serves nearly all of Indianfields Township.

With a total land area of just under 35 square miles, there is plenty of room for you to live, work and play. There is access to the Cass River as well as other bodies of water. The township also owns and maintains the Indianfields Township Park and Indianfields Township Cemetery.

Village of Kingston

- Memory Park



Village of Millington

- Arthur Latham Park



ARTHUR LATHAM PARK

IS THE PLACE FOR YOU!

80 ACRES

LIVE STREAM

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT IN SHADED AREAS

HORSESHOE PITS

SOFTBALL FIELDS

SOCCER FIELDS

DISC GOLF

PAVILIONS WITH LIGHTS & ELECTRICITY

PERENNIAL GARDENS

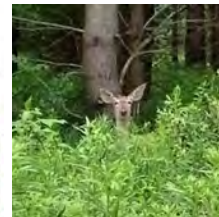
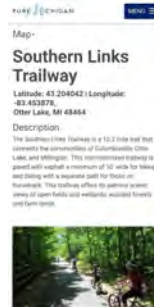
HAND PUMP WELL

EXERCISE & NATURE TRAILS

PICNIC AREAS WITH COOKING GRILLS

BOY SCOUT CABIN

Southern Links Trailway Liner Trailway Park comprised of regional and intergovernmental cooperative agreements



Village of Mayville

- Ohmer Park
- Bodeis Park



Image above is Shay Lake, Mayville

Village of Reese Reese Community Park

- Reese Memorial Park



Tuscola County

- Vanderbilt County Park and Campground (see above)
- Cass River
- TBD "The Parcels" located at Chambers & Washburn along the Cass River



The Cass River Watershed

The Cass River Watershed encompasses an area of 908 square miles (approx. 578,812 acres), contains 1352 miles of rivers and streams and hundreds of miles of county drains. The Cass River flows to the Saginaw River and eventually to Saginaw Bay. Located in Michigan's Lower Peninsulas Thumb Region the watershed includes portions of Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties. Communities in the watershed include Bridgeport, Cass City, Caro, Frankenmuth, Marlette, Millington, Tuscola, Vassar, and Ubyly.



Cass River



Cass River

River in Michigan

4.3 ★★★★★ (126)

The Cass River is a 61.5-mile-long river in the Thumb region of the U.S. state of Michigan. It drains large portions of Sanilac and Tuscola counties and smaller portions of Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, and Saginaw counties. Wikipedia

Length: 62 mi

Mouth: Shiawassee River

Country: United States

Sources: South Branch Cass River, North Branch Cass River



59+ Photos

Tuscola Township

- Community Park



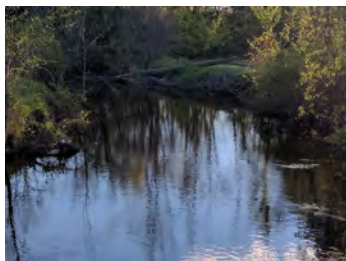
Village of Unionville

- 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 RV Park
- Ivan Middleton Hall
- Vassar Memorial Park
- Vassar Rail Trail
- Vassar Fairgrounds



Township of Vassar

- Vassar Township Community Park



Watertown Township

- Fostoria Park
- North Lake Murphy Park

The following is a list of 13 state of Michigan public lands for use in Tuscola County, managed by: Cass City DNR Wildlife Office, 4017 East Caro Road, Cass City, MI 48726; phone 989-872-5300 with the exception of the Quanicassee State Wildlife Area which is managed by the Bay City DNR Wildlife Office, DNR Service Center, 503 North Euclid Avenue, Suite 1, Bay City, MI 48708; phone 989-684-9141.

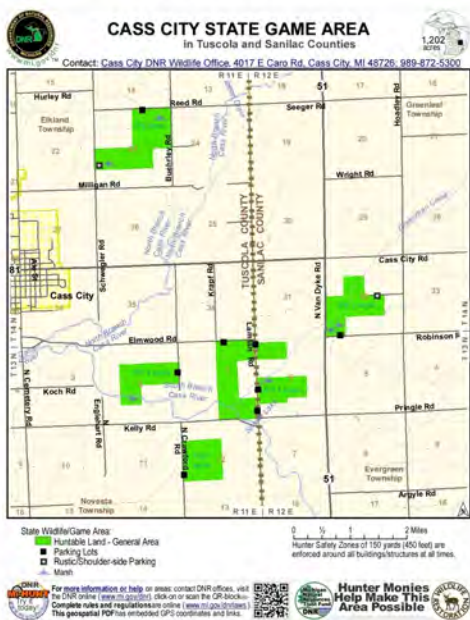


(Map Source – Tuscola County Mosquito Abatement, 2014)

Almer Township State Game Area - Size: 160 acres approx.



Cass City State Game Area (western portion) - Size: 1,203 acres approx.



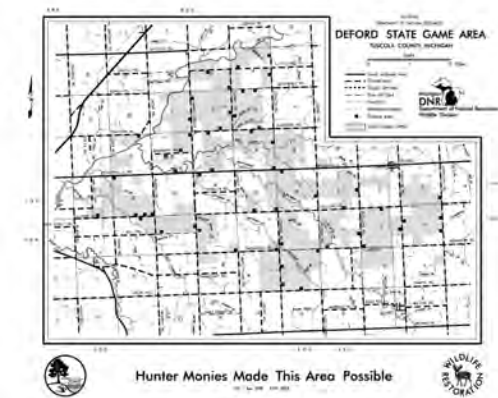
Clark Lake State Game Area - Size: 80 acres approx.



Columbia Township State Game Area - Size: 208 acres approx.



Deford State Game Area - Size: 10,390 acres approx.



Denmark Township State Game Area - Size: 95 acres approx.



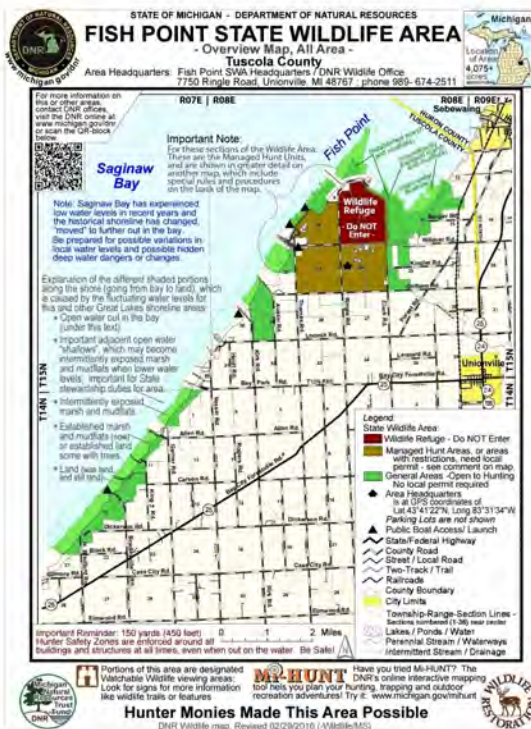
Elmwood Township State Game Area - Size: 271 acres approx.



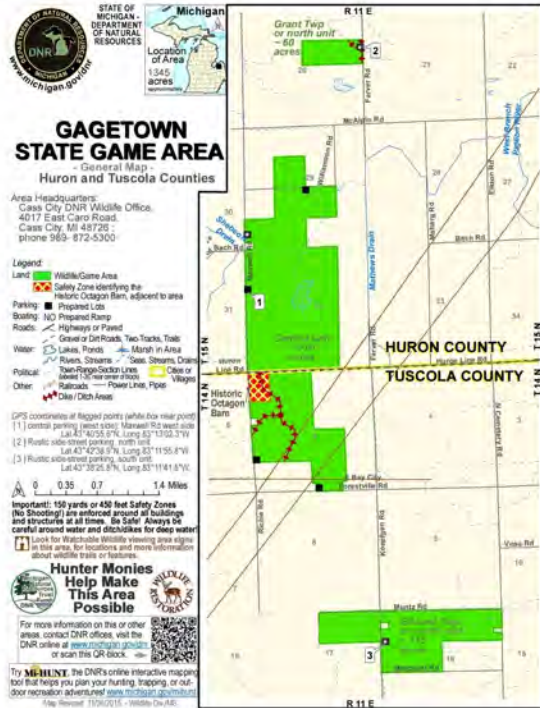
Fish Point State Wildlife Area - Size: 4,075 acres approx.

Fish Point State Wildlife Area, one of Michigan's Wetland Wonders, is located in Unionville, Michigan, just out into the Saginaw Bay. Because of the tremendous variety and abundance of waterfowl found here, the Fish Point area has been called the "Chesapeake of the Midwest." During spring and fall migrations the habitat and food resources at this site attract thousands of ducks and other water birds.

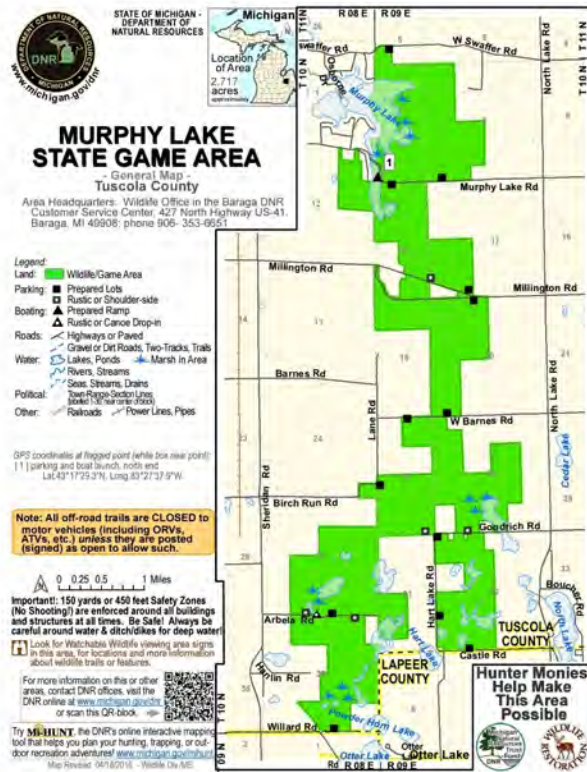
Visit Fish Point for opportunities to see dabbling and diving ducks along with Canada geese. Mallards are the most commonly seen duck with a good number of green-winged teal, wood ducks, widgeon, pintails, gadwall and black ducks as well.



Gagetown State Game Area (southern portion) - Size: 1,371 acres approx.



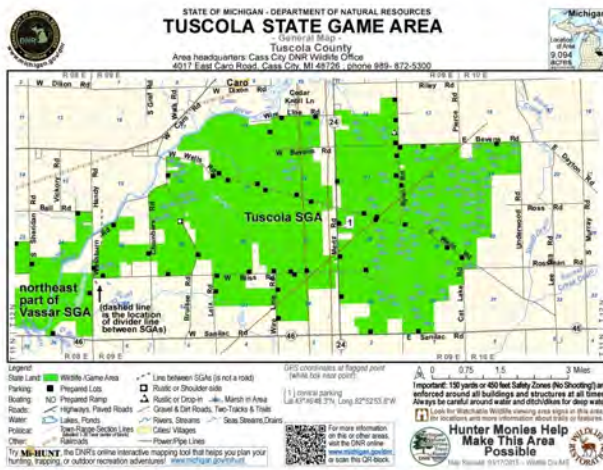
Murphy Lake State Game Area - Size: 2,565 acres approx.



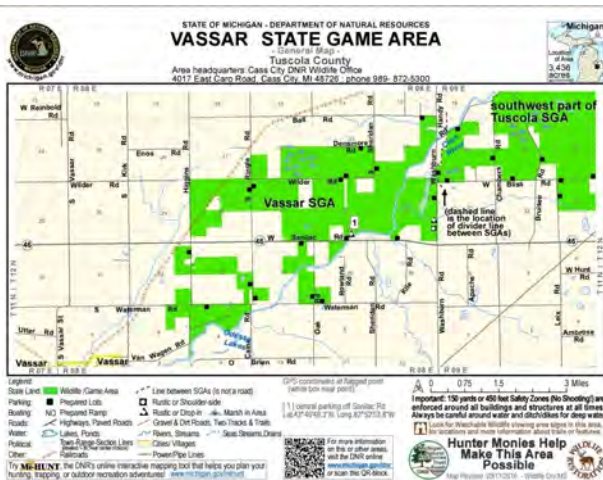
Quanicassee State Wildlife Area (eastern portion) - Size: 1,922 acres approx.



Tuscola State Game Area - Size: 9,259 acres approx.



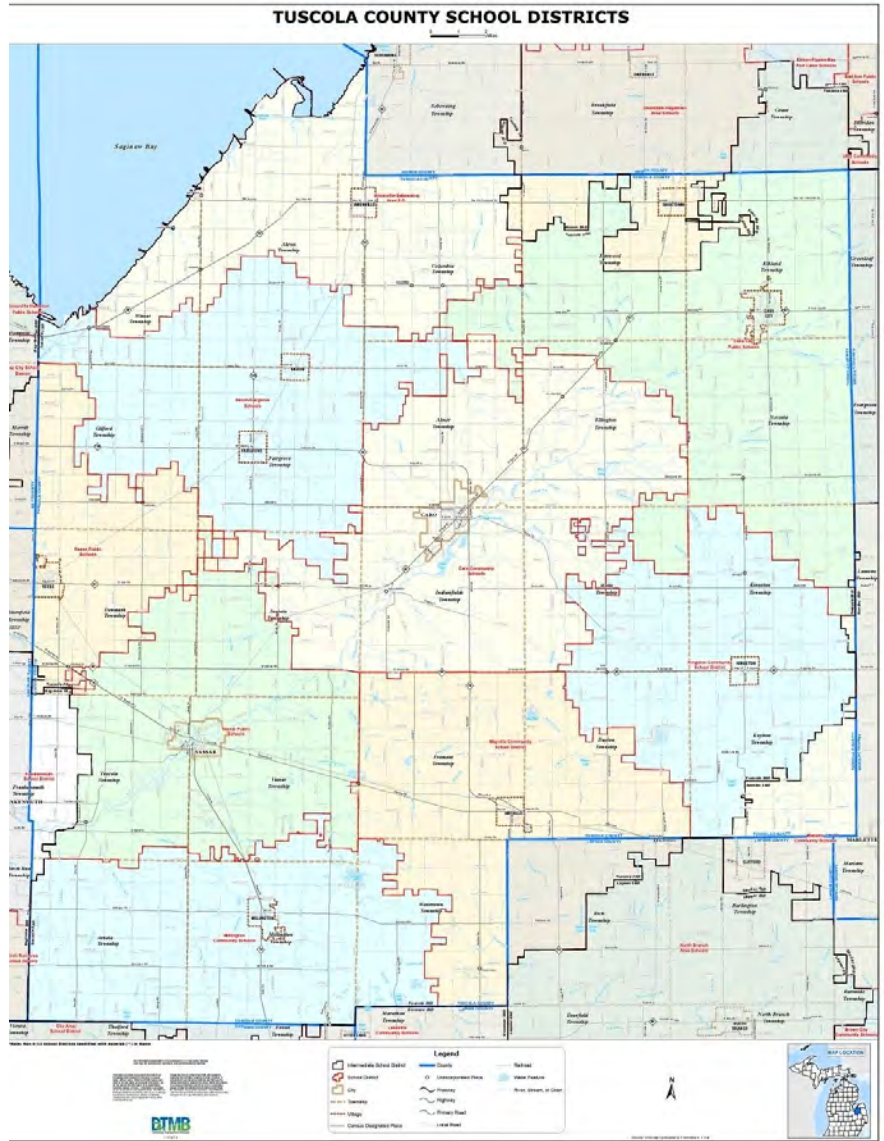
Vassar State Game Area - Size: 3,379 acres approx.



Tuscola County 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 Source – Michigan.gov



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 622.55 acres of dedicated parks, open space, and recreation areas.

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 2020 U.S. Census recorded population of 53,323 and approximately 622.55 acres of parks and recreational land, Tuscola County has about 14.6 acres of parkland 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.

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 a relatively flat open space area suitable for a number of activities, including "pick up" ball games and soccer practice.

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. Tuscola County 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.

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.

The chart, below, summarizes Tuscola County’s parks and recreation facilities by classification.

Location	Facility	Type	Size/Acres	Playground Area	Playground Equipment	Courts	Special Features
Charter Township of Almer	AYSO Soccer Park	Neighborhood Park	8			8 Soccer fields	Concession Stands, Meeting Place, Restrooms
Charter Township of Almer	Darbee Farm Park	Community Park	40	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball	Horseshoe Pits, Nature Trails, Pavilions, Picnic Area, Restrooms
Charter Township of Almer	Township Hall (Darbee School)	Neighborhood	15	Yes	Yes		BBQ Grills, Picnic Tables

City of Caro	Atwood Park	Mini Park	0.75				Gazebo, Benches
City of Caro	Bieth Park - Tuscola County Fairgrounds	Specialty Park	40	Open flat area	Yes	Basketball, Shuffleboard, Tennis, Volleyball	Auditorium, Arts & Crafts Facility, Exercise Course, Horse Riding Arena, Horse Stables, Grandstands, Outdoor Hockey Rink, Race Track
City of Caro	Chippewa Landing Park	Community Park	16	Yes	Yes	None	BBQ Grills, Boat Ramp & Dock, Fishing, Ice Skating, Pavilions, Restrooms, River Walk with Pedestrian Bridge
City of Caro	Colonial Park	Mini Park	1.5				
City of Caro	Northwood Heights Park	Mini Park	1.5			Softball	
City of Caro	Williamsburg Subdivision Park	Mini Park	1.5			Softball	
City of Vassar	Harper Park	Neighborhood Park	7.5	Yes	Yes	Basketball	Pavilion, Horseshoes, Picnic Tables, Benches
City of Vassar	Hillside Park	Mini Park	0.6				Bandshell, Picnic Facilities
Q	McKinley School	Mini Park	0.8	Yes	Yes		Benches
City of Vassar	McKinley School Park	Mini Park	0.5				
City of Vassar	T. North Pavilion	Specialty Park	2.6	No		Basketball	Hockey Rink, Bleachers, Storage Building, and Farmer's Market
City of	Vassar	Special	20.9	No		None	Horse Track, Bleachers, Horse Stable,

Vassar	Fairgrounds						Restrooms
City of Vassar	Vassar Lion's Park	Mini Park	0.75				Pavilions
City of Vassar	Vassar Memorial Park	Community Park	35.8	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Softball	Benches, Bleachers, Restrooms
City of Vassar	Riverside RV Park	Specialty Park	8.6	Open flat area	Yes	Volleyball	Boat Ramp, Campsites, Picnic Facilities, Shelter
City of Vassar	White Birch Park	Neighborhood Park	5.7	Yes	Yes	Basketball	Pavilion, Grills, Picnic Tables, Benches
Village of Millington	Arthur Latham Park	Community Park	86.2	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Soccer	BBQ Grills, Boy Scout Building, Campsites, Disc Golf, Horseshoe Pits, Exercise Trail, Nature Trails, Picnic Tables, Pump Water, Shelters, Stream Access
Township of Indianfields	Township Park	Community Park	60	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Volleyball	Boardwalk, Canoe Launch, Master Gardener Garden, Nature Trails, Office Nature Center, Pavilions, Picnic Area/Tables, Restrooms, Fishing
Township of Tuscola	Community Park	Community Park	15			Ball Fields	Cass River Access, Concession Area, School Building
Township of Waterman	Fostoria Park	Community Park	33	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Basketball	Concession Stand, Grandstands, Skate Park, Horseshoe Pits, Ice Skating, Pavilions, Picnic Area
Tuscola County	The Parcels	Specialty Park	14.05	No	No	None	Cass River Access
Tuscola County	Vanderbilt County Park and	Specialty Park	17.85	Open flat area	Yes		Campsites, Fire Rings, BBQ Grills, Picnic Tables, Restrooms, Pavilion, Volleyball, Horseshoes, Municipal Water, Dump

	Campground						Station
Vassar Township	Vassar Community Park	Specialty Park	26	No	No	None	
Village of Akron	Akron Park	Neighborhood Park	4	Yes	Yes	Ball Field	Creek, Picnic Tables, Shelter, Restrooms
Village of Cass City	Recreational Park	Community Park	82.5	Yes	Yes	Basketball, Ball Fields, Tennis, Volleyball, Football	¼ Mile Track, Arts & Crafts Facility, BBQ Grills, Concession Stand, Restrooms, Horseshoe Pits, Nature Trails, Disc Golf, Stadium Seats, Swimming Pool, Toboggan/Sled Run
Village of Cass City	Northwood Park	Mini Park	2			Basketball	
Village of Fairgrove	Fairgrove Community Park	Community Park	8	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields	Picnic Tables, Shelter
Village of Fairgrove	Mulberry Park	Neighborhood Park	5	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Tennis Courts	Building, Drinking Fountains, Pavilions, Picnic Area
Village of Gagetown	Village Park	Neighborhood Park	10.5			Ball Fields	Concession Stand, Bleachers, Restrooms
Village of Kingston	Memory Park	Neighborhood Park	5	Yes	Yes	Basketball, Ball Diamond, Tennis	BBQ Grills, Pavilions, Picnic Tables, Restrooms
Village of Mayville	Bodeis Park	Neighborhood	1	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields	Picnic Tables, Restrooms, Pavilion

		Park					
Village of Mayville	Ohmer Park	Community Park	7	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields	Picnic Area/Tables, Restrooms, Nature Trail, Disc Golf
Village of Mayville	Skate Park	Mini Park					
Village of Mayville	Skate Park	Neighborhood Park					
Village of Millington	Rotary Park	Mini Park					
Village of Reese	Reese Community Park	Community Park	12	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Shuffleboard, Tennis	Concession Stand, Picnic Area, Restrooms, Shelter, Pavilion, Water Pond
Village of Reese	Reese Memorial Park	Neighborhood Park	4	Yes	Yes		Gazebo, Picnic Tables, Restrooms
Village of Unionville	Community Park	Community Park	20	Yes	Yes	Ball Fields, Basketball, Tennis	Ice Rink, Picnic Area, Shelter, Restrooms
Village of Unionville	Kemp Memorial Park	Mini Park	0.5				Picnic Tables, Gazebo
Watertown Township	North Lake Murphy Park	Specialty	1				BBQ Grills, Swimming/Fishing, Boat Ramp, Ice Skating, Pump Water

Total Mini Park Acres	10.4
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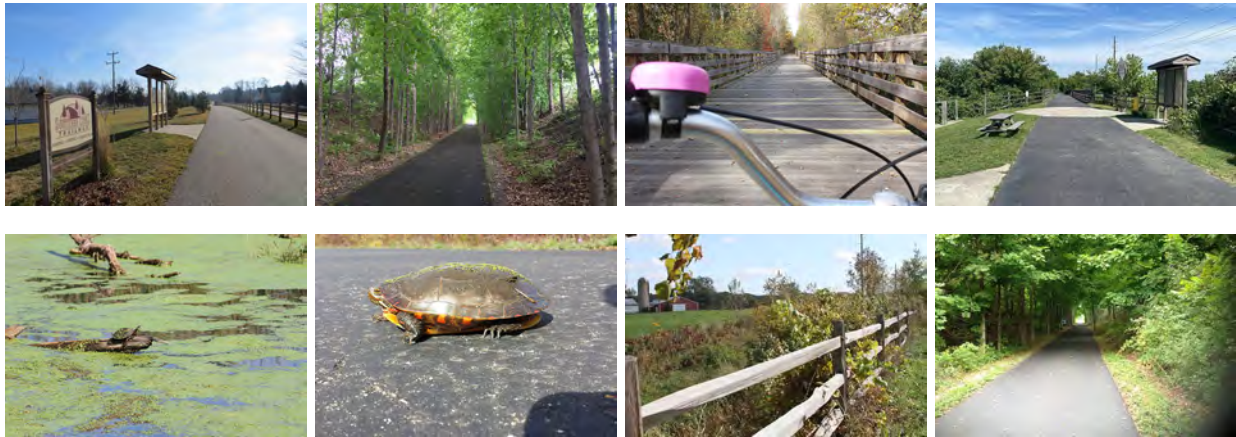
Total Neighborhood Park Acres	65.7
Total Community Park Acres	415.6
Total Specialty Park Acres	130.95
Total Park Acres in Tuscola County	622.65

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.



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.

	Michigan	Tuscola County
Total Population as of 2020	10,077,331	53,323
Total Population as of 2010	9,883,640	55,729

	Michigan	Tuscola County
Persons under 5 Years as of 2020	5.7%	5.2%
Persons under 18 Years as of 2020	21.5%	20.3%
Persons 65 Years and over as of 2020	17.7%	20.8%

	Michigan	Tuscola County
Households 2015-2019	3,935,041	21,777
Persons per Household 2015-2019	2.47	2.38
Median Household Income - 2019	\$57,144	\$49,988
Persons in Poverty	12.6%	11.4%

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. Campers and visitors to Vanderbilt Park interested in fishing are also challenged due to not having a Saginaw Bay access point.

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 a few 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. 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-Avooca 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-Pipestone 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, Tuscola County uses the Systems Approach to Planning to update this park 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 Tuscola County to establish new recreational goals and objectives for the county. The plan will also provide Tuscola County eligibility for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other state and federal sources to assist in reaching park and recreational goals to further instill a sense of place and community belonging.



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.

Tuscola County provided an opportunity for public input, comments, and suggestions utilizing a public meeting, a survey, and an advertised public hearing of which a copy of the advertisement of these meetings may be found on pages 50 and 51. Additionally we have offered for Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan input at numerous Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission meetings as well as through the Friends of Tuscola County Parks & Recreation social media page.

Public Hearing

A public meeting was held Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. during 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 the Tuscola County community. 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 comment and the 30 day review by area residents, reference pages 48-49.

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, April 20, 2022, held in the Board of Commissioners Chambers at 125 N. Lincoln Street, Caro Michigan, and a community survey facilitated through the Friends of Tuscola County Parks and Recreation social media page.

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 income 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 – Develop the newly acquired "Parcels" property located at the intersection of Washburn and Chambers on the Cass River in Caro

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 Tuscola County 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. Tuscola County is working to provide quality facilities that show we are in an active community that takes pride in its community facilities.

Objective – Provide a boardwalk, dock and launch ramp for canoe and kayaks at 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. Tuscola County is working to provide recreational opportunities for all residents.

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 - Tuscola County 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

Objective – Increased focus on Cass River initiatives with the Cass River Greenway and others to continue the clean-up of the river and connect the Tuscola County branch into the existing Cass River Water Trail

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 Plan

The Action Plan details the direction over the next five years in order to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of park and recreational opportunities within Tuscola 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 Improvement Plan (CIP) projects for this Parks and Recreation Master Plan have been established not only to provide a framework for decision makers, but also to enable Tuscola County 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 Tuscola County 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 Plan (CIP) Schedule provides an outline and guide as to the desires of our community:

TUSCOLA COUNTY – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) SCHEDULE – 2023 – 2027 PARK & RECREATION MASTER PLAN		
	FACILITY / PROJECT	TOTAL COST
Vanderbilt County Park and Campground		
1	Improvements to Bath Road & vicinity to alleviate flooding & drainage problems	\$500,000
2	Acquire land to expand park/campground	\$50,000
3	Expand/improve parking, ADA compliant	\$50,000
4	Improve picnic pavilion and upgrade to be ADA compliant	\$25,000
5	New fire pits	\$10,000
6	New picnic tables, ADA compliant	\$10,000
7	New playground equipment, ADA compliant	\$200,000
8	All-season covered sitting areas containing informational/educational signs	\$200,000
9	Install Sky Cam with WIFI for campers	\$200,000
10	Install new activity courts and improve existing courts	\$50,000
11	Improve park fencing, perimeter and boundary markers	\$50,000
12	Develop walking/nature trail	\$100,000
13	Engineering Study - Saginaw Bay and associated permits	\$125,000

14	Open up access to Saginaw Bay with a boardwalk and launch including a water access trail for ice fisherman & outdoor enthusiasts	\$500,000
15	Develop the Frank and Amelia Vanderbilt Saginaw Bay Welcome Center	\$500,000
TOTAL		\$2,355,000.00

TUSCOLA COUNTY – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) SCHEDULE – 2023 – 2027 PARK & RECREATION MASTER PLAN		
FACILITY / PROJECT		TOTAL COST
The Parcels		
1	Ground clean-up, clearing & maintenance	\$125,000
2	Install a parking area, ADA compliant	\$50,000
3	Install park pavilions (2), ADA compliant	\$300,000
4	Engineering Study - Cass River and associated permits	\$125,000
5	Install Cass River canoe & kayak launch with a boardwalk overlooking the Cass River	\$500,000
6	New picnic tables, ADA compliant	\$10,000
7	New playground equipment, ADA compliant	\$200,000
8	All-season covered seating areas containing informational/educational signs	\$200,000
9	Develop the Cass River Welcome Center	\$500,000
10	New fire pits	\$25,000
11	New BBQ grills	\$25,000
12	Develop a walking/nature trail with a Cass River boardwalk	\$100,000
TOTAL		\$1,700,000
GRAND TOTAL		\$4,055,000

Action Plan Rational

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

Open up Access to Saginaw Bay

Currently there is no easy access to Saginaw Bay. Fishing enthusiasts would like better access. Additionally, canoe and kayakers along Saginaw Bay do not have access to Vanderbilt County Park and Campground. The community would also like to see a Tuscola County public beach.

Resolve Flooding & Drainage Problem

Land improvements are needed.

Install SkyCam with WIFI

From the community input received, it was suggested to install a skycam overlooking Saginaw Bay offering free WIFI to Vanderbilt Park campers & visitors. Cameras would also provide park security.

Install Playground Equipment

From the community input received, it was requested to install additional playground equipment for children.

Install New Activity Courts and Improve Existing

From the community input received, it was suggested to have more activities to do - installing additional activities for the community such as a Pickleball Court and Disc Golf, among others. The current areas for volleyball & horseshoes are often under water caused by localized flooding.

Refurbish or Replace Picnic Tables

The current picnic tables are several years old and in need of refurbishment and/or replacement.

Improve Park Fencing, Boundary & Perimeter Markers

The current white fence posts are several years old and in need of upgrade.

Install a 2nd Park Pavilion

As the park grows, so does interest in using the existing park pavilion.

Develop a Walking/Exercise Nature Trail

Currently there are no designated trails or walking paths. A new trail should provide a pleasing atmosphere with a sense of place and a greenway, with accessibility to all. There may be an opportunity for a memorial walkway along with a boardwalk along Saginaw Bay.

Install Informational Signs

Informational signs to include: historical, Saginaw Bay, local nature, local legends, etc. There is currently minimal shelter from adverse weather so the desire is all season covered pavilions where permanent educational signage can be mounted, some pavilion designs even offer seating.

Welcome Center

There is currently minimal shelter from adverse weather. There is community interest to develop a Frank & Amelia Vanderbilt Saginaw Bay Welcome Center where nature and outdoor education classes can be offered.

Extend Parking Area

The current parking area is inadequate and needs to be extended to allow for easier access to the park as well as for persons of all levels of mobility. Localized flooding has affected this area as well.

Acquire Land to Expand Park Area & Amenities

With the improvements in place, it is projected that the campgrounds will easily exceed capacity and need to be expanded.

As the funds become available, the future improvements to the new park (temporarily named The Parcels) located at Chambers & Washburn on the Cass River include:

Ground Clean-Up/Clearing

The location is currently heavily wooded and not easily walkable.

Gravel Parking Area

This would be a parking area similar to what is currently at Vanderbilt Park, approximately 80x40.

Park Signs

There are currently no signs on the property - a welcome sign is needed as well as entrance & exit signs.

Pavilions

There are currently no pavilions on the property.

Grills

There are currently no grills on the property.

Develop a Walking/Exercise Nature Trail

Currently there are no designated trails or walking paths. A new trail should provide a pleasing atmosphere with a sense of place and a greenway, with accessibility to all. There may be an opportunity for a memorial walkway along with a boardwalk along the Cass River.

Open up Access to the Cass River

Gaining Cass River water access along with increased boardwalk and nature trails were strongly suggested initiatives from the community feedback and the community also has interest in a public beach area. All of this adds to the efforts already happening with the Cass River Greenway Initiative.

Informational Signs

Informational signs to include: historical, Cass River, local nature, local legends, etc. There is currently minimal shelter from adverse weather so the desire is all season covered pavilions where permanent educational signage can be mounted, some pavilion designs even offer seating.

Canoe/Kayak Launch with Cass River Boardwalk

We are looking to add a canoe/kayak launch in Parcel B/#2 on the Cass River.

Welcome Center

There is currently no shelter from adverse weather. There is community interest to develop a Cass River Welcome Center where nature and outdoor education classes can be offered.

Firepits

The assumption is they can be safely installed without creating a fire risk. Currently there are no firepits.

Funds may also contribute to the following efforts & initiatives:

**Clean-Up and Inclusion of the Tuscola County branch of the Cass River into the Cass River Water Trail
Tuscola County Parks & Recreation marketing, promotional, and fundraising efforts**

Tuscola County Parks & Recreation online store

In collaboration with Mission 1 in Caro, Michigan, an online outdoor store is being developed as a local fundraising effort offering goods to the community in which a small percentage of every purchase comes back to the Tuscola County Parks & Recreation program.

Additional Tuscola County Parks & Recreation ideas include:

Tuscola Outdoors digital publication

Annually, possibly quarterly.

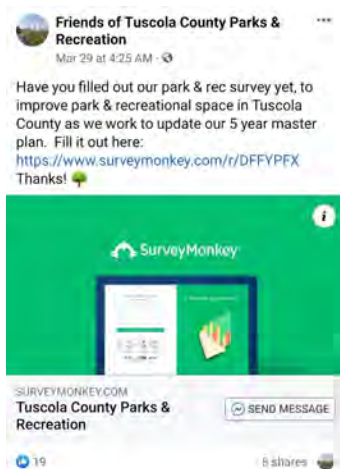
Friends of Tuscola County Parks & Recreation 501(c)3 nonprofit certification

Pending support, this may evolve similar to how the Tuscola County Pumpkin Festival works.

Adoption Process

The following public comment notices were made:

Public Survey:



Public Comment Notices:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2022 AT 3 PM - 4 PM

January Parks & Rec Commission Meeting - PUBLIC WELCOME!

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

[Manage](#)

1 hr

Event by Friends of Tuscola County Parks & Recreation

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

About Discussion

Posts

Say something...

What To Expect

January Parks & Rec Commission Meeting - PUBLIC WELCOME! Community input is appreciated on the upcoming Tuscola County Master Plan, 2022-2026.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022 AT 3 PM - 4 PM

February Parks & Rec Commission Meeting - PUBLIC WELCOME!

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

[Manage](#)

1 hr

Event by Friends of Tuscola County Parks & Recreation

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

About Discussion

Posts

Say something...

What To Expect

February Parks & Rec Commission Meeting - PUBLIC WELCOME! Community input is appreciated on the upcoming Tuscola County Master Plan, 2022-2026.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022 AT 3 PM - 4 PM

March Parks & Rec Commission Meeting - PUBLIC WELCOME!

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

[Manage](#)

1 hr

Event by Friends of Tuscola County Parks & Recreation

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

About Discussion

Posts

Say something...

What To Expect

March Parks & Rec Commission Meeting - PUBLIC WELCOME! Community input is appreciated on the upcoming Tuscola County Master Plan, 2022-2026.

Public Hearing Notice

The following public hearing notices were made:

PUBLIC NOTICE
TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Public Review

Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan

2023 – 2027

The Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission will be holding a Public Review on Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. in the Commissioners' Board Room of the H.H. Purdy Building at 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, MI 48723

The purpose of the public review is to make the Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2023 – 2027 available for public review and comment. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Draft is available for review in the Tuscola County Controller's Office, 125 Lincoln Street, Caro, MI, 48723. For more information, contact the Tuscola County Controller's Office at 989 672-3700.

Jody Fetting
Clerk

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2022 AT 3 PM - 4 PM

April Parks & Rec Commission Meeting & Master Plan Public Hearing - PUBLIC WELCOME!

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

[Manage](#)

1 hr

Event by Friends of Tuscola County Parks & Recreation

125 W Lincoln St, Caro, MI 48723-1548, United States

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

About Discussion

Posts

Say something...

What To Expect

April Parks & Rec Commission Meeting & Master Plan Public Hearing - PUBLIC WELCOME! Community review & feedback is appreciated on the upcoming Tuscola County Master Plan, 2023-2027. Master Plan Public Hearing begins at 3:30 PM.

Public Hearing Minutes



**Tuscola County
Parks & Recreation Commission**
125 W. Lincoln Street 986.672.5700
Caro, MI 48723 Fax: 989.672.4011
www.tuscolacounty.org

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 20TH 2022 PUBLIC HEARING / REVIEW
OF THE
TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION 5-YEAR MASTER PLAN**

Wednesday, April 20, 2022 – 3:00 pm
Commissioners' Board Room of the H.H. Purdy Building
125 W Lincoln Street, Caro MI

Roll call:

Appointed members: Terri Eden (Vice Chair), Steve Escott, Robert McKay (Chairman), Paul Newby, Megan Rule, Kim Vaughan;
Ex-Officio members: Lonnie Kester (Planning Commission Chairman – or designee: Cynthia Kapa or Rick Boylan), Bob Mantey (Drain Commissioner – or designee Dara Hood or Alicia Little),
Julie Matuszak (Designated Road Commissioner).

Excused Absence(s): – Terri Lynn Edem --

Call to order: With quorum present consisting of Steve Escott, Lonnie Kester, Bob Mantey, Julie Matuszak, Robert McKay, Paul Newby, and Kim Vaughan, the April 20th Public Review / Hearing pertaining to the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan was called to order by Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman Robert W. McKay at 3:40 pm, April 20, 2022.

Others present: Shelly Lutz of the Tuscola County Executive Office, Clayette Zechmeister – Tuscola County Controller-Administrator, Mike Miller – Director of Tuscola County Buildings and Grounds Department, Pam Shook – Vanderbilt Park Host, and Nancy Barrios from Cass City.

Approval of agenda: Approval of agenda moved by Kester, supported by Escott, and passed unanimously.

Receipt of public comments regarding the Tuscola County Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan: Period of public comments began at 3:45 pm:

Comments by Pam Shook:

- 1) It sounds like big dreams;
- 2) There is no room at Vanderbilt Park for another pavilion;
- 3) The online survey was not specific to Vanderbilt Park;
- 4) Volunteers could do Vanderbilt Park clean-up as they have in the past;
- 5) USA schools will be contributing to volunteer clean-up in May.

Comments by Nancy Barrios:

- 1) Vanderbilt Park not looking well maintained and split rail fence is needed;
- 2) Ground needs to be raised at horseshoe pits;
- 3) Price quotes are too high – example being that for playground equipment;
- 4) Phragmites in Saginaw Bay are a problem that must be corrected;
- 5) More money needs to be put into Vanderbilt Park by Board of Commissioners;
- 6) Park road needs to be fixed;
- 7) Construction of a kayak launch is “do-able”;
- 8) Vanderbilt Park needs to be made and kept presentable.

Moved by Escott, and supported by Kester that the aforementioned Public Comments on the Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan be maintained as part of the official record. Voting results: 7 Yea, 0 Nay = motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment: moved by Kester, supported by Escott, and passed unanimously. The Public Hearing / Review of the Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan was adjourned at 4:07 pm on Wednesday, April 20, 2022.

Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission Mission Statement

The mission of the Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission is to advise the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners on matters of policy and practice pertaining to the encouragement, establishment, and provision of recreational opportunities for residents of, and visitors to, Tuscola County.

Tuscola County Park and Recreation Commission Master Plan Resolution of Adoption

Tuscola County Park and Recreation Master Plan Board of Commissioners Resolution of Adoption

Appendix - Public Survey Results

What would you like to see more of in Tuscola County?	Responses
More activities with the Cass River	65
More nature trails	63
More events, activities, festivals, and things to do in the existing green space areas	53
More NEW park & recreational areas & activities	48
A Tuscola County public beach	44
More rail trails connecting areas	42
More public awareness (marketing) of what's already available	41
More outdoor live entertainment	41
More/better collaboration between villages, townships & the county to share knowledge, pool resources, etc.	36
More financial investment to improve EXISTING green spaces	36
A Tuscola County swimmer's/boater's beach (Saginaw Bay)	36
More physical fitness opportunities	35
More playground equipment for kids	35
Welcome Centers/Interpretive Nature Centers offering nature-related educational classes	30
Saginaw Bay public access from Vanderbilt Park including a dock/breakwall/boardwalk	28
More community gardens	27
More pet friendly opportunities (dog parks, etc.)	26
More horseback riding opportunities	22
Better accessibility (wheelchair friendly, etc.)	17
I'm happy with what we currently have	2

Write-In - Canoe/kayak launches around the river.	1
Write-In - Dog-Free" zones. Aggressive, unleashed dogs have approached my children several times when we attempt to visit a park/hike a trail. Animal Control doesn't care. I don't feel safe. Pass legislation that would result in a hefty fine for unleashed dogs in public areas.	1
Write-In - Trails dedicated to RZR and other off road vehicles... Similar to "The Mound" in Genesee County	1
Write-In - Mountain bike trails	1
Write-In - Mountain biking - we have nothing currently	1
Write-In - Canoe & kayak launch on Cass River	1
Write-In - Fix the dam so we have a public access again to get our boats in the river	1
Write-In - group of people who clean up trash on state land I'd be willing to do so as I always try to on the weekends	1
Write-In - Pet friendly anything!!!!	1
Write-In - Stuff for kids to do	1
Write-In - More campgrounds. Not state campgrounds. Private or county owned	1
Write-In - ATV trails	1
Write-In - More playground equipment for Vanderbilt park	1
Write-In - Designated ORV trails through some state land	1
Write-In - Bicycle paths	1
Write-In - CAMPING	1
Write-In - Hold Walmart to their agreement to build a trail or a portion of a rail trail in area that they agreed to in order to have a business in Caro. Also, Capitalize on the ice fishing and duck hunting on Saginaw Bay where participants use Vanderbilt park with no room to park and last I heard they don't spend any money in the county so look at business advertising there.	1
Write-In - Bike trails in Caro	1

Please identify yourself as it relates to park & recreational space & activities	Responses
Canoe/Kayaker	67
Farm Markets	65

BBQs, Smores & Bonfires	63
Fisher (Fishing)	61
Picnics & Roadtrips!	57
Beach Life! I like sand in my toes.	55
Gardener	54
Swimmer	53
Morel Mushroom Hunting	48
Camping with a Camper	46
Stargazer/Skywatching	45
Healthy Lifestyle/Physical Fitness Enthusiast	43
Live Entertainment	43
Rock Hunter (Rock Collecting/Painted Rocks)	41
Outdoor Reading/Book Enthusiast	39
Hunter	37
Dog Walker & Dog Parks	37
Splash Pads	35
Hobby Farmer/Homesteader	34
My outdoor swing/hammock is my favorite place	34
Rustic Camper (Tent)	34
Boater	34
Naturalist/Environmental Sustainability	32
ATV/ORV Rider	28
Hiker/Backpacker	28
Wild One - Back Roads, Forests & Wild Areas	27
Sports Enthusiast/Athletic	27
Parks & Playground Equipment	26
Birding Enthusiast	25

Watching the clouds for shapes	25
Geocaching	25
Outdoor Photographer	25
Weather/Storm Watcher	22
Outdoor Yoga	21
Sitting by a tree and eating an apple	20
Bicyclist/Mountain Biking	18
Skeet & Target Shooting	18
Equestrian	16
Ice Skating	16
Ax Throwing	15
Sledder	15
Snowmobiler	15
Golfer	15
Archery	15
Kite Flying	14
Beach Volleyball	14
Frisbee/Disc Golf	13
Metal Detecting	13
Rollerblading	13
Skier	12
Horseshoe/Cornhole Champion	11
Runner (Marathons & Fun Runs)	10
Motorcycle Enthusiast (Bike Runs)	8
Skater (Skate Parks)	6
Tennis/Badminton	5
Drones	4

Write-In - Recreational Therapist	1
Write-In - Walking the trails	1
Write-In - As a fitness instructor I'd love to help supply this area with more opportunities!	1
I don't really go outside	0

As it relates to nature trails, how do you enjoy them?	Responses
Scenic - alongside forests & water ways	103
Peaceful walking trails	90
Exercise/Physical fitness	55
Wildlife viewing/Birdwatching	53
Dog walking	51
Morel hunting, berry picking, etc.	50
Water access trails (for fishing)	48
Nature photography	43
Bicycling	37
Sitting and reading	30
ATV/ORV trails	24
Hunting	20
Horseback riding	19
Write-In - Education for my kids and students	1
Write-In - Picnics	1
Write-In - Geocaching	1
Write-In - I'd be happy with any type	1
Write-In - Mindful walking utilizing all 5 senses	1

7Would you like to see better communications (social media posts, digital publications, emails, texts, a calendar, etc.) about park & recreational opportunities, activities, & events in Tuscola County?	Responses
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Yes!!!	127
No, it's a waste of time. I already search out my interests. Use your time in better ways.	11
Write-In - Coordinated info on what is available throughout the County.	1

Would you like to see Tuscola County invest more in park & recreational opportunities, events, activities, and green spaces even if it means taking away dollars from current economic agenda items?	Responses
Yes! Every county around Tuscola is doing beautiful things with their green spaces. Tuscola County needs to catch up!	113
No! Economic issues are more important than anything park & recreational.	15
Write-In - Clean up the Cass River. Pass legislation that limits the sludge companies are allowed to dump into the river. The smell is so terrible, it makes it difficult to enjoy walks near it.	1
Write-In - Depends on what resources are used for what expenditures	1
Write-In - Involve the two... bring more business, for better investment	1
Write-In - Vanderbilt Park has been forgotten by Commissioners. Surrounding County Parks have regular improvements...other than the sewer drop there hasnt been any significant investments in our Park. It's pitiful.	1
Write-In - Find a balance between the two	1
Write-In - I think funds should be spread out, not taken away from other areas	1
Write-In - I'd like to see both, if possible	1
Write-In - No opinion	1
Write-In - Depends on specific details	1
Write-In - yes and no. depends what issues are more important	1
Write-In - It depends on the situation	1
Write-In - Parks and Recreation attracts businesses because it attracts employees to want to live there and this is one of the biggest factors in gaining businesses in our community.	1
Write-In - Not sure, I'm not familiar with current economic agendas	1
Write-In - Case by case dependent	1

Are you open to a tax millage?	Responses
I prefer to see more businesses step up & private donors be involved first. Along with local fundraising & grant applications submitted. Keep tax millage the last resort.	78
Yes, park & recreational space is always worth it!	60
No way, I already pay enough taxes!	17
Write-In - Grants are available.... someone just needs to follow up on writing them and the County needs to step up and make some real investments in Tuscola County recreation. Despite ongoing local efforts to clean and promote the Cass River, Sanilac County is currently the only community on the Historic Upper Cass River to pursue Grants or make any active attempts to improve recreational offerings on the Historic River. I think that's an absolute shame that more hasn't been done... especially in Cass City where an exposed Dump site with barrels and spooled wire, hot water heaters etc remains exposed and abandoned on the banks of the Cass River at the Historic "Forks of the River".	1
Write-In - Use the weed money	1
Write-In - I feel we pay enough but money not spent wisely	1
Write-In - Set up an interagency 501c3 where more than just the county contributes like is done for garbage or fire.	1

Currently Tuscola County Park & Recreation falls beneath the Tuscola County General Fund. Would you be more involved if Parks & Rec had their own budget with full transparency of cost & spend? Should we pursue 501(c)3 non-profit status for our Friends of Tuscola County Parks & Rec group?	Responses
A 501(c)3 would open up a lot of new opportunities - please pursue it!	50
I am concerned about budget transparency and I won't donate or contribute to Tuscola County Parks & Rec until I know the funds are being used explicitly for the said park & recreational purpose.	48
Budget transparency doesn't matter to me. Do whatever helps drive positive change in our county.	30
If it happens, I would like to be involved with the 501(c)3 as a volunteer, donor, board member, etc.	13
The current model is not working - change is needed!	9
The current model is working fine	7
Write-In - The County needs to step up before you move to a 501C3.	1

Write-In - I don't know enough about the situation to pick a choice	1
Write-In - Use the weed money	1
Write-In - I don't have enough knowledge to answer this.	1
Write-In - Not sure, I have not researched the options. I would support works best for the Parks & Recreation of Tuscola County	1
Write-In - Parks and Rec has their own separate budget already, I can see it on the county web page. It appears all revenue is generated from Vanderbilt Park. 501 status would remove it from the county.	1
Write-In - No opinion	1
Write-In - Not sure	1
Write-In - Not sure	1

If money was not a concern, what would you want to see happen in Tuscola County as it relates to park & recreational space?
A community fitness center, a local pool, and more healthy options for events.
A navigable Cass River but ONLY if done in an environmentally sensitive way
A public beach or outside swimming pool
Add bike trails and ATV trails
Add play equipment back.... that's what a park is
Adult hockey and softball leagues
All of the above
As an off road motorcyclist I'd love to see an ORV park with tight trails for motorcycles. More and more parks and trails are dedicated to the four wheel crowd. At parks it can be dangerous to mix traffic, and the four wheel riders have all the roads and routes available to them now... more mileage than ever before. Motorcyclists prefer tighter, more technical riding. Alternatively, when we can't get up north, we enjoy mountain biking. It's sad that the Detroit metro region has miles and miles of trails while we have none.
ATV trail riding
beautification and promotion of our area
Bicycle paths to link towns paved or gravel

Bird House "City" (multiple birdhouses high off the ground, each one sponsored by a local business with their name/logo on it) with a sign nearby that identifies the common birds drawn to the area.
Boardwalk and more kayak launches. More marketing.
Boardwalk on Saginaw Bay
Cass River recreation area, complete with Modern Camping and ADA canoe/ kayak launch
Cass River Trailway expanded
Connect our public rail and water trails with the Schools, Iron Belle, Frankenmuth, Vanderbilt Park, CBF Fields, Parks. Also, enhance Vanderbilt park so the drain and Saginaw Bay can be used by at least kayakers, Ice fishers and Duck Hunters.
Connect the Rail Trails
Dog areas, dog training
Education and hands on experience with horticulture involving traditional medicine... including a farmers market to buy/sell/trade!
Equestrian trails, maybe have some of the state land open to horses
FIX THE DAMN DAM
For the Cass River to be like the Ausable, a tourist destination
Fully develop the Cass River WaterTrail
Horse trails. This community is very large with equestrians. We need to let them have more access.
Horseback riding & Atv trails
I think the fairgrounds area needs some attention, and there should be more effort in bringing in summer activities and places for people the spend more time outdoors
I would like more paved walking trails, like Vassar, Millington, Columbiaville, Frankenmuth, Bay City and Saginaw have.
I would like to see more access to trails for equestrians to ride.
I would like to see the Cass River cleaned up and the dam fixed fixed so the public could use it for boating and swimming.
I would like to see wooded areas preserved, and our public places build around or incorporated into them.
I would probably create a public beach. I would definitely invest in trash pick up from state land. I pick up hundreds of pounds of trash a year, I would make money like the park offs an the road to be on any trail or state land. 5\$/day and it's enforced there. That would put a stop to a lot of the drug use and trash on the vassar state game area and several others top. I would also try to make the

river more of an attraction. Dog park... Too much to list

Improve current areas to make them more attractive to tourists & locals, have more events (music, festivals, etc). Add enhance beach areas.

In my opinion the more green space and state land the better I love living in a county full of trees and the wonderful outdoors versus turning into a county with just building after building that eventually all end up abandoned and empty I believe our green space management is doing a great job I just wish more people would pick up after themselves or not dump trash in public hunting areas as there's only so many of you I try my best to pick up what I can

Just more to keep our kids busy and out if trouble

Kayak launch site at Caro Center and coordinated efforts to promote the River and access Countywide. Boardwalk to walk out in the only water access site in the Bay Tuscola County has...Vanderbilt Park..

Kayak rental

Keep the parks clean!

Live events

More activities for the under 60 yr old but over 14 yr old group. Street dances, talent shows, young bands

More biking/walking/running trails in the Caro area

More campgrounds, splash pads, updated playgrounds with new materials like in Frankenmuth Park, VA park in Saginaw

More charity events

More community things! Events etc

More equestrian trails

More kayak access to rivers

More outdoor opportunities

More pools and rec centers

More river viewing areas and educational centers

More things for people to do in our county that would be free or a low cost for families to do without costing a lot ... it would bring more people to our area!!!

More things for the kids

More unpaved hiking trails that are maintained and labeled well. Additional paved bike trails with access to bathrooms

More walking trails, senior exercise equipment
More walking/bike trails. Good ones.
More waterway trails for kayaker. More designated hiking trails. More garbage receptacles. Safe walkways and trails.
More waterway trails for kayaker. More designated hiking trails. More garbage receptacles. Safe walkways and trails.
More winter outdoor fitness opportunities
Mountain bike trails
Multi-use, off road trails that traverse through and connect towns. Longer/more access for canoe/kayak on the Cass River. Recreation center with pool, hot tub, sauna, I door and outdoor rec and exercise opportunities.
Open more parks and campgrounds
Outdoor entertainment
Outdoor family fun and pet areas for easy socialization
Splash pad
The Cass River used more from north to Frankenmuth. People can come here instead of AuSable. Lets clean up what we have to canoe and kayak. Maybe we need another RV/campground on the Cass. Also need a park/stopping place for restrooms, picnic, garbage collection and maybe a vendor to sell food during busy weekends
Update all parks play equipment
utilize more of the chippewa landing area have more activities and expand the area on both sides. some nice water front dock seating on the other side with a spot for food trucks to park and eventually have our own food truck festival could possibly bring in alot of money
Utilize what we have. Develop the river front IE campgrounds, kayak liveries, etc.
Rec family space
Fix the dam
Pool
Invest in more outdoor spaces
Caro dam repaired river park improvement
More easy river access sites to put in and take out kayaks. Indoor recreation for kids (like an indoor playplace) during bad weather

Outdoor entertainment venue State land walls and paths

From everything above, what is your #1 request for us to achieve/improve in the next 5 years?

Access to river

Activities for all ages

ATV trails and bike trails

Beach

Beach in Tuscola County

Beach space

Bike paths

Bike trails in Caro

Bring in more events for our county. Look at Frankenmuth as an example. Something happens there every weekend

Build a community rec center

Campgrounds

Canoe/kayak launch at Caro Center site, Boardwalk at Vanderbilt Park. Coordinated marketing and advertising of all Countwide Recreational assets to promote kical abd Countywide use of all facilities...

Cass River

cass river especially in the caro area, fix the dam

Cass River opportunities

Cass River trailway expanded

Childrens museum and increased educational/entertainment opportunities

Clean environment 🧹

Clear up phragmites in Saginaw Bay

Connect the Rail Trails

Cutting grass

Different activities

Easy access to equestrian trails, either dedicated only to horses or shared on public land
Equine riding trails
Expand athletic opportunities. Invest in new things for kids to do. Summer programs
Help fix the dam
Hiking trails
Horseback riding
I would like to see more trails for walking and biking . Would like to see our existing parks for our children enhanced with more equipment and outdoor bbq.
I'd really love to see mountain bike trails.
If there's nothing for the younger people they'll leave and not come back.
Improve the outdoor spaces we already have
Improve Vanderbilt park . Parking lot for ice fisherman
Inline hockey league and softball leagues
Keep our parks safe for children to enjoy without the pervasive threat of off-leash dogs.
Keep the parks clean!
Knowledge of the importance of the farm diet to avoid the Pharmaceutical industry and hopefully have a healthier community!
Live entertainment
Make our city look better and a better safer place to be.
Make the public aware of what is currently available and work toward adding events that would draw people to the park/green areas
More areas
More down town business
More fishing
More kayak/canoe launches along the river
More nature-centered events
More open places for the community to use and that helps bring in more attention and revenue to Tuscola county, caro.
More outdoor & nature education

More senior activities
More things for children to do at Vanderbilt park
More things to get kids involved with the outdoors instead of them sitting at home doing nothing and it makes parents go out and actually spend quality time with their children
More walking/biking trails. Rails to trails north of Caro.
Mountain bike trails
Multi-use trails
New/improved beach attractions to draw more tourism to the area, boosting our local economy along with providing outdoor activities for the locals.
Number 8 (Cass River recreation area, complete with Modern Camping and ADA canoe/ kayak launch)
Paved walking/bike riding trails, like the rails to trails program.
Pools and rec centers
Preserving our wooded areas and making them path accessible.
Putting in effort to make things look pretty and upkeep them.
Rail Trails have the biggest impact. Tuscola County should still have the lifetime agreement with ITC for the Rail Trail from Caro to CBF and could go beyond to Sanilac Co if Scot Severn is involved who lives just beyond the CBF fields and organized the public against the trail as he built his garage on the trail but doesn't own it and ironically he works for the DNR opening trails for the State of MI. Have to start with champions so that means only doing the portion from Caro to CBF where all of the people are for it except Barrigars who ride their ATVs on it and the guy lives near CBF fields that uses it for a gun range shooting at home plate at the CBF fields. This trail could in the future connect both golf courses in Caro, Caro and Kingston via the Polly Ann Trail and Port Sanilac which would then connect to the Great Lakes. The other major Rail Trail to be most concerned about is the Southern Links and staying up to date with the efforts for the Iron Belle. It would be interesting to know if Scot Severn is working on that.
Roller skating park or building
Safe and easy trails for family use. Designated trails for experienced users seeking a challenge.
Safe and easy trails for family use. Designated trails for experienced users seeking a challenge.
Senior citizen exercise equipment in a park. Everyone, including children could use it.
Something that will benefit families can do together
To apply for and leverage more grants
Trails!! Nature

Update parks
Use the weed money
Work on a community center possibly with a nice pool and a skating rink.
Family activity space
More investment in youth/ teen activities to keep them out of crime.
Rail trails
Improving existing areas. Millington parks need improvement before new things are built
River access for kayaks
Communication current availability

Any final comments for us? Please be kind, I volunteered for this.
A pool, use the weed money
Everyone tends to leave Caro to vacation up north or go camping up north. It would be nice if a campground and beach could be created.
Fix the dam
Goodluck
Great survey
i am glad you are reaching out and finding out what the people are concerned with
I appreciate the survey opportunity. Glad you are getting this feedback from the public
I would volunteer, but can't I'm disabled
I'm currently happy so i can only get happier
Indianfields park is beautiful; it just needs some TLC. Chippewa Landing is unusable. The sights are ugly and the smells are disgusting. Please invest in Indianfields Park, not CL. Thank you for conducting this survey!
Info on clean up on Cass River
It would be great if people could donate toward a project that would bring tourists through use of Cass River.
Keep up the good work
Keep up the great work trying to keep the community involved and their voices heard too!!

More fishing
More green space is always liked and would help bring people outside.
More kayak activities as a group
No matter what you do, you're doing more than anyone else is currently so you're doing a great job, thank you for driving this effort
No Millington needs more areas
Our community needs more homegrown, safe and healthy things for our kids and adults to do. The equestrian community could largely help with this if we had someplace to be able to practice it more often and enjoy it.
Our county has a lot of natural spaces, which I feel can be made a main tourist check mark.
Our equine community is very large and they would love to have a safe place to ride trails.
People need to take pride in their property and improve our county and if we had places for to go with very little cost it helps our lower income families have fun and activities for the whole family nice parks something we can be proud of!!!!
Thank you and continue to be an advocate for a better world
Thank you for asking the community what we'd like to see
Thank you for caring about our County
Thank you for giving us a voice and listening!
Thank you for listening!
Thank you for setting this up
Thank you for spending your time caring for our community. I hope we are able to see more growth in the next few years!
Thank you for your efforts.
Thank you for your time
Thank you for your time! I appreciate you.
Thank you! I care about the residents of Tuscola County. Any of these improvements would improve physical and mental health of our residents as well as social and economic opportunities.
THANKS
Thanks for seeking input!
Thanks for this survey

Thanks for your time.
The Caro area needs to catch up on things for people of all ages to do for entertainment and outdoor exercise.
The dog park was a wonderful addition to our community and so was the splash pad!! Absolutely love both and we use them on a daily basis when the weather permits. Thank you so very much for adding both. Cannot say enough how much we appreciate it and love using them!!!
There's enough focus on children...6 parks but nothing for the kids over 13 and their parents. We deserve a place without screaming children.
This is an EXCELLENT survey! I hope the results are taken seriously and real improvements are planned and funding provided.
try to be more public. some things I only hear through the grape vine. could send out: flyers or some type on mail
Would love a building for a roller skating rink
Yes I received a call during filling out the survey, went back to finish and I had to start again twice. So I am leaving all up to the country

TUSCOLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

125 W. Lincoln Street
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Caro, MI 48723

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Fax: 989-672-4011

At a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for the County of Tuscola, State of Michigan, on the 28th day of July, 2022 with the meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Commissioners Present: *Thomas Young, Thomas Bondwell, Kim Vaughan,
Doug DuRussel, Dan Gremshaw*

Commissioners Absent: *None*

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner *Gremshaw*,
seconded by Commissioner *DuRussel*,

TUSCOLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RESOLUTION 2022-15

ADOPTION OF TUSCOLA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION 5-YEAR MASTER PLAN FOR 2023 THROUGH 2027

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 of 2023 through 2027; and

WHEREAS, an open public meeting for review was held on April 20, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. at the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners; Chambers located at 125 W. Lincoln Street in Caro MI 48723; and

WHEREAS, a thirty-day public review of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Draft was provided to the public at the Tuscola County Controller-Administrator's office, 125 W Lincoln Street in Caro MI, and on the Tuscola County web site found at www.tuscolacounty.org so as to accommodate the opportunity for people to express

opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspect of the Parks and Recreation 5-Year 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

WHEREAS, a public hearing session was held on July 28, 2022, at 8:00 a.m. at the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners' Chambers located at 125 W. Lincoln Street in Caro MI;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Tuscola hereby adopts the 2023 – 2027 Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Master Plan as a guideline for improving parks and recreation for residents of, and visitors to, the County of Tuscola.


Ayes: Young, Vaughan, AuRussel, Shenslan, Bardwell

Nays: None

Absent: None

Resolution declared approved dated this 28th day of July, 2022.

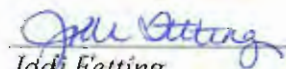
Date 7-28-22



Thomas Bardwell, Chairperson
Tuscola County Board of Commissioners

I, Jodi Fetting, Tuscola County Clerk, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of an agreement approved by the Board of Commissioners at a regular meeting on July 28, 2022.

Date 7-28-22



Jodi Fetting
Tuscola County Clerk