

HILLSDALE COUNTY RECREATION PLAN

2021-2025



HILLSDALE COUNTY RECREATION PLAN

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HILLSDALE COUNTY RECREATION PLAN

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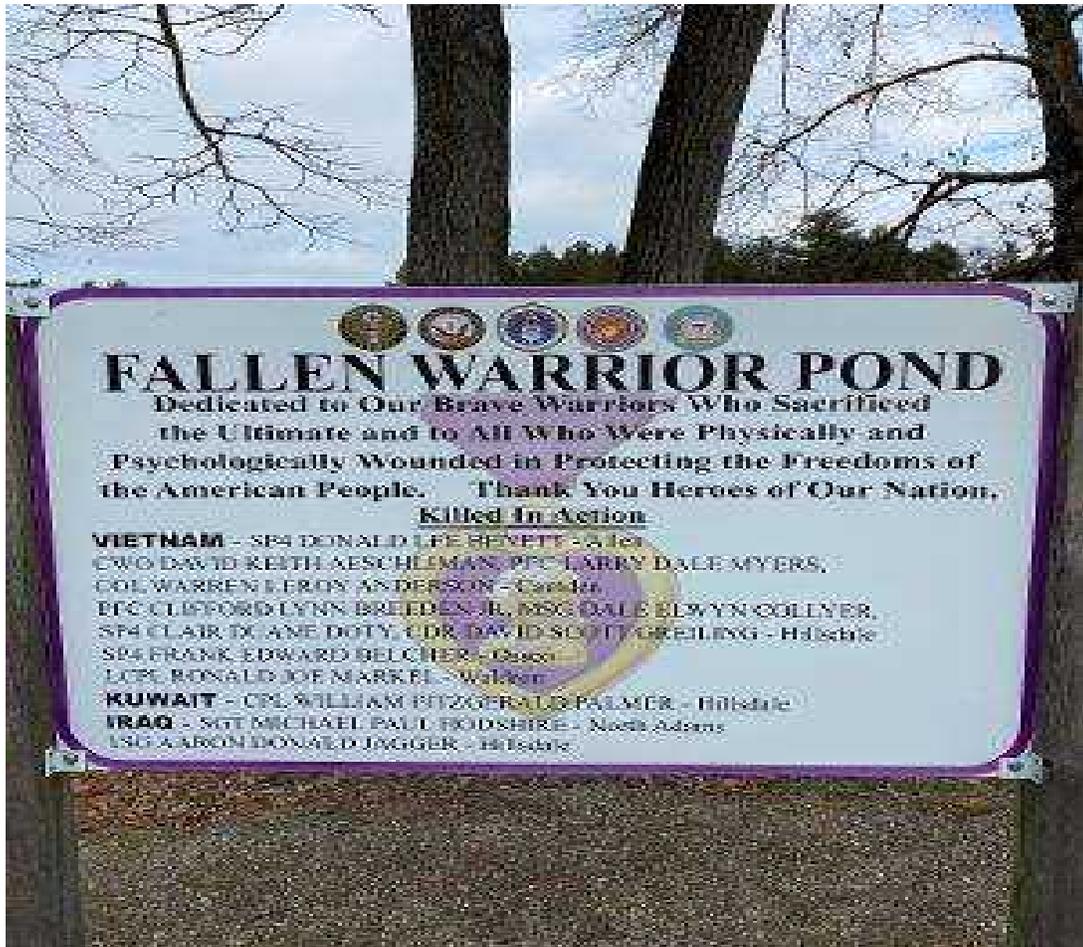
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INTRODUCTION

A Recreation Plan for All of Hillsdale County

Hillsdale County has developed a Recreation Plan to serve as a guideline to improve recreation facilities and develop new recreational opportunities. To that end, this document forms the basis to guide policy for implementation of improvements and new initiatives that will meet the recreational goals and interests of the Hillsdale County community. The development of this plan was guided by the Hillsdale County Parks Commission.

Before any recreation plan is adopted and enacted, it is first important to understand what the needs of the residents are, what recreational opportunities already exist, and what sort of projects and programs are relevant for residents based on age, ability, population, density, and the availability of recreational opportunities in neighboring communities. This plan has carefully considered input and suggestions via active communication from area residents, officials, and other community stakeholders. This input is a critical component to this plan, and together, the voices of the Hillsdale County Community have united to develop a recreation plan to enhance the quality of life for everyone.

The foundation for the development of the Hillsdale County Recreation Plan was based on the following goals:

- Involve the community in the process to develop a five-year Recreation plan,
- Inventory and map existing Hillsdale County recreational facilities,
- Build common ground among Hillsdale County stakeholders in addressing the future recreational needs and priorities of the Community,
- Enable the County to be eligible for financial assistance based upon the Recreation Plan,
- Facilitate inter-agency collaboration in establishing recreation goals, objectives, and actions, and
- Consistency with and expansion upon goals and objectives set forth in existing planning documents that deal partially or wholly with recreation.

Broadly speaking, Hillsdale County officials intend to use this plan to guide their work on all future recreational and parks projects within the county. Specifically, this plan is developed in accordance with the guidelines for Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources(MDNR). A five-year, MDNR-approved Recreation Plan is necessary for the governmental entities to pursue MDNR-administered grants. This Recreation Plan is written for Hillsdale County. It covers all aspects of recreation within the County.



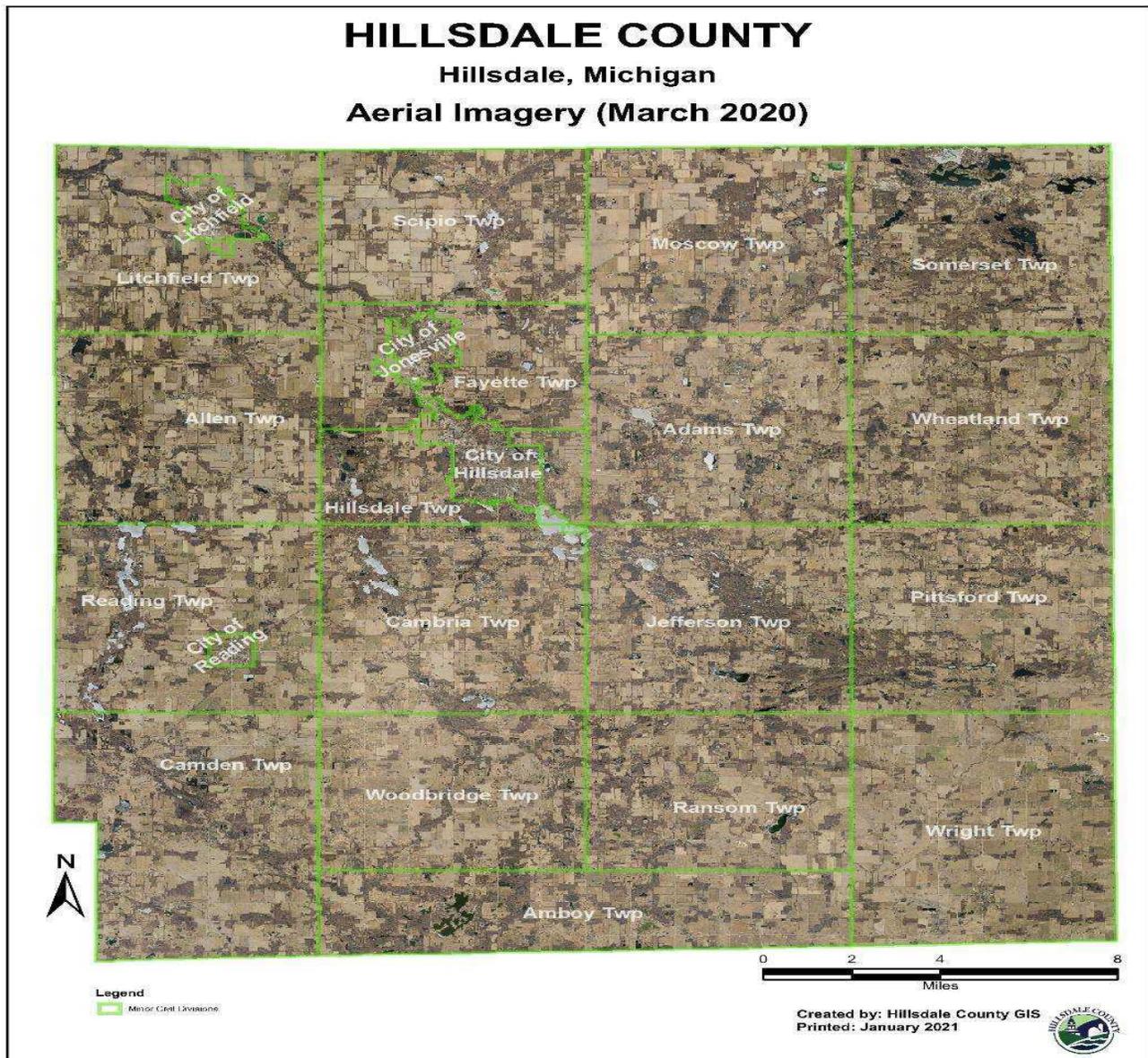
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

About Hillsdale County

Hillsdale County is located in south-central Michigan, halfway between Chicago and Detroit along the Old Sauk Trail, also known as the U.S. 12 Heritage Route. Lenawee County is located to the east, Branch County to the West, Jackson and Calhoun Counties to the north, and Ohio's Williams County to the south as well as Steuben County in Indiana.

Covering an area of approximately 598 square miles, Hillsdale County is generally rural with a large agricultural and manufacturing base. The County is home to more than 388 lakes covering over 4,300 acres. The County is also known for its hiking trail which is part of the North Country trail system. An aerial image of Hillsdale County is shown in Figure 1.

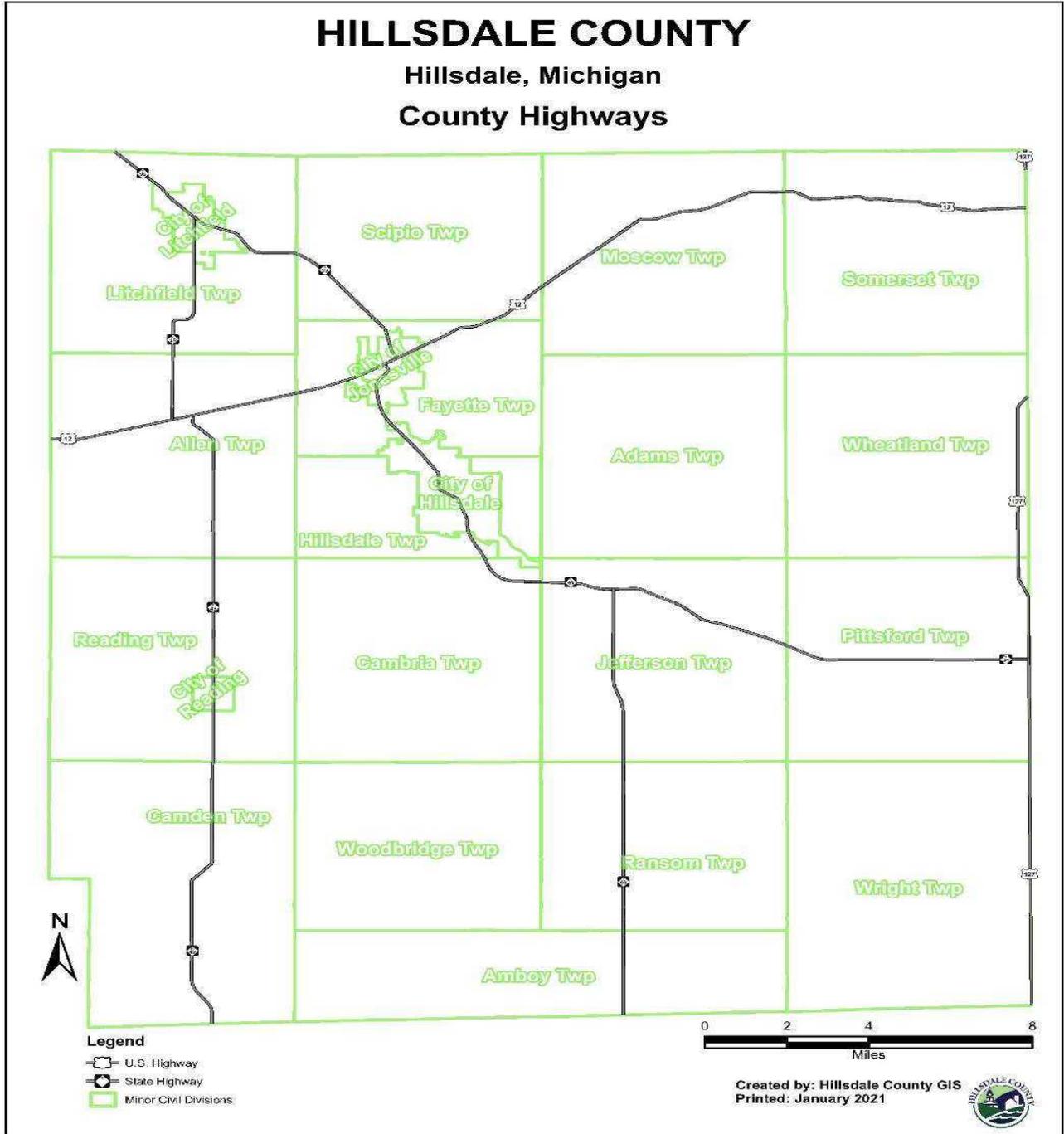
Figure 1



U.S. 127 is a main north south route and is located on the eastern edge of the County. M-99 is a main north south route and traverses the center of the County. U.S.-12 is a main east west route and traverses through the northern part of the County. M-34 is also a main east west route and traverses the center part of the county. M-49 is a main north south route on the west side of the county.

Politically, Hillsdale County is comprised of 18 townships, 4 cities, and 4 villages. Hillsdale is the county seat and it and Jonesville serve as the commercial center of the county. The political jurisdictions and state roads in Hillsdale County are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
HILLSDALE COUNTY POLITICAL JURISDICTIONS



According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5 year estimates from the U.S. Census, the population of Hillsdale County is 45,605. This is an estimated decrease of 1,086 from the 2010 census. The city of Hillsdale accounts for about 18% of the population, while Somerset Township is the largest township and accounts for about 10% of the county population. The remainder is spread fairly evenly among the other jurisdictions.

According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census there are 22,122 housing units in Hillsdale County. Nearly 14,000 of these are owner occupied. About 4,000 are rentals. About 2,000 are seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

The median age of the population in Hillsdale County is 42.3 years. This is higher than Michigan’s median age which is 39.8 years.

Selected census data for Hillsdale County as compared to the State of Michigan is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3
SELECTED CENSUS DATA FOR COMPARISON
HILLSDALE COUNTY AND MICHIGAN

| | Hillsdale County | Michigan’s |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Population 2015 estimate* | 45605 | 9,986,857 |
| Population 2010 estimate* | 46,691 | 9,884,116 |
| % of Population 65 & older | 20.2% | 17.7% |
| % of population under 18* | 21.5% | 21.5% |
| Median Age* | 42.3 | 39.8 |
| % of population with disability* | 10.6% | 10.2% |
| % bachelor’s degree of higher* | 17.3% | 29.1% |
| Median household income* | \$49,622 | \$57,144 |
| Per Capita income | \$25,621 | \$31,713 |
| Average household size* | 2.60 | 2.56 |
| Median housing value* | \$120,100 | \$154,900 |

*2019 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

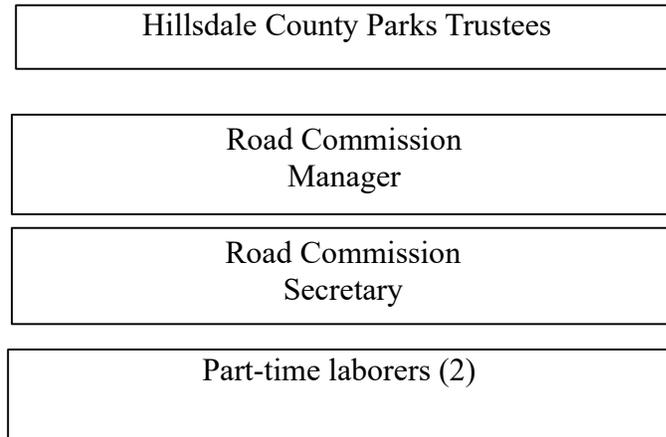
How Parks and Recreation Function in Hillsdale County

Park Trustees and Department Operation

Parks and Recreation functions in Hillsdale County are carried out by the Hillsdale County Parks Trustees except for the Courthouse Park. The County Parks Trustees function as an agency of Hillsdale County established pursuant to the provisions of PA 90 of 1913, as amended. The County Parks Trustees are under the general control of the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners. In accordance with PA 90 of 1913, the County Parks Commission consists of the three members of the Hillsdale County Board of Road Commissioners. One commissioner is appointed to the Parks Board to act as a liaison between the two bodies. The Parks Board was established in 1919. See Figure 4.

The Parks Board of Trustees are responsible for park operations and management. Two part time employees are hired to maintain the parks. Hillsdale County has the authority to commit funds for park and recreation, accept grants, and purchase land on behalf of the community.,

Figure 4
HILLSDALE COUNTY PARKS ORGANIZATION CHART



Revenue and Budgets

The Hillsdale County Parks are funded through a county general fund appropriation of \$25,000 each year. In addition, a rental house on the grounds of one park provides additional revenue of \$6,600, and rental income from the community building normally provides revenue. This community building rental revenue was lost in 2020 due to Covid. It is normally about \$14,000.

Budgets for the Hillsdale County Parks are shown below. Hillsdale County does not do any official recreation programming at this time. There are no campgrounds in any of the parks.

Figure 5
 Hillsdale County Parks and Recreation Budgets

| | 2020 | 2021 |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| Operation & Maintenance | \$31,600 | \$31,600 |
| Capitol Expenses | \$9,000 | \$0 |

Annual budgets for the parks are adjusted during the year as needed capitol improvements are noted. There is no county organized recreation programming. There is a consistent allocation of \$25,000 per year from the county with additional dollars as needed for capital projects and improvements.

The County of Hillsdale has the authority to accept grants and purchase land on behalf of the community and to commit funds for parks and recreation. There is no relationship with schools or non-profits involved in recreation.

Role of Volunteers

The work done at the parks is with 2 part time employees hired by the Parks Trustees. There is no organized volunteer program for the parks. A former parks board trustee devotes a lot of his time to helping maintain the parks.



RECREATION INVENTORY

Learning About Hillsdale County Parks and Natural Resources

Hillsdale County Parks

\The Hillsdale County Parks inventory was conducted in February, 2021. The ADA checklist for fishing and play areas show that most areas are not ADA compliant at this time, but will serve as a guide for future development. All parks were visited and photographed in February, 2021.

Hillsdale County has five parks. One is a swimming beach only. Two are for picnics and playing only. One is a former rearing ponds that was deeded to the county by the State of Michigan in 1961(Liber 365 P. 212-215). One is for picnics and honors our veterans.

PARKS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Hillsdale County has not classified its parks. I have done so, with the Park Trustees permission, using a simplified system that identifies four of them as basic recreation parks and one of them as a cross between recreation and conservation. Figure 6 gives the detailed definition for each type of park. These definitions are modified from the State of Idaho.

Figure 6

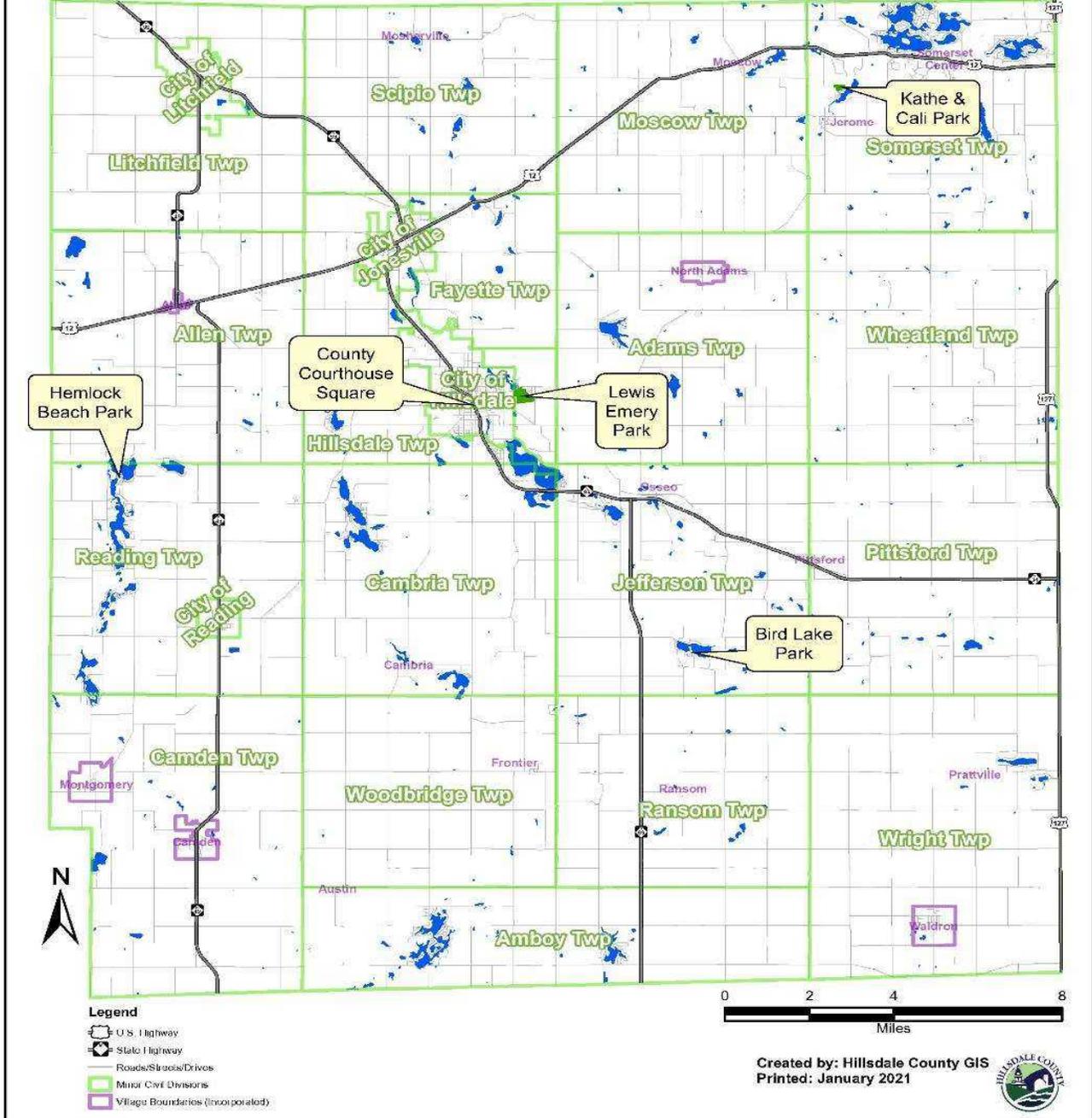
PARK CLASSIFICATION FOR HILLSDALE COUNTY

| | CONSERVATION PARK | RECREATION PARK |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Qualitative Value of Area Resources | Varied resource value | Low to moderate resource value |
| Value of Area for Active Recreation | Low to moderate | Diverse, significant, and high active recreational value |
| Degree of Educational Opportunity | Moderate | Moderate |
| Resource Area Characteristics | Although able to accommodate groups of visitors these areas are generally quiet and passive | Areas are public and dynamic. They are readily accessible, busy, and characterized by almost continuous activity. |
| Typical Activities | Natural park activities, plus fishing and special events | Natural and Conservation Park activities plus swimming, picnicking, group sports, playground activities |
| Acceptable Level of Resource Impact | Low to moderate | Moderate to high |
| Anticipated Degree of Human Contact | Frequent encounters with other individuals and groups | Visitors are certain to encounter many other visitors engaged in a variety of recreational and social activities |
| Management Objectives | Provide use and protection; establish use limits for conservation | Provide recreational opportunities; no irreparable resource damage. |

HILLSDALE COUNTY

Hillsdale, Michigan

County Parks



Inventory of Additional Recreation Facilities

| Name of Facility | Owners | Acres | Facilities |
|--|-----------------------|-------|--|
| Hillsdale & Jonesville Golf Courses | Private | 80 | 9 & 18 hole course |
| Country Club Golf | Private | 60 | 9 hole course |
| Sandy Beach Park | Public | 64 | Dock spaces, picnic tables, fishing, ice skating, swimming, bathhouse, playground, grills, |
| County fairgrounds | Public | 70 | Horseshoes, museum, grange hall, typical fairgrounds |
| Hillsdale College | Private | 180 | Athletic facilities |
| The Stadium | Private | 1 | Roller Skating |
| Owens Memorial Park | Public | 25 | Playground, picnic tables & grills, shelters, benches |
| Marina | Private Am. Legion | 2 | Clubhouse, docks, playground |
| Jonesville/ Hillsdale Trail system | Public | | Non motorized bike and walking path |

In addition every village, city, and some townships have recreational parks as well. These mostly consist of picnic tables, grills, and some playground equipment. These parks number about 17.

Bird Lake Park

Bird Lake Park is a 60 foot by 120 foot lot used exclusively as a swimming beach. It has room to park about 4 vehicles at a time. This is the only county park that provides swimming. A bathroom is provided in the summer only with a Port-A-John toilet. It is a mini park.

Bird Lake Park

Recreation Park

60 x120 feet

Service Area-local residents

Swimming

Port-A-John in summer only



Hemlock Lake Park

Hemlock Lake Park is a 1.25 acre wooded area consisting of a small pavilion, picnicking areas, and playground equipment. It has no lake frontage. It is a mini park.

Hemlock Lake Park

Recreational Park

1.25 acres

Service Area-county residents

Picnicking

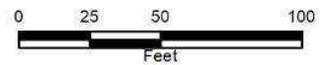
Playground



HILLSDALE COUNTY

Hillsdale, Michigan

Hemlock Beach Park



Created by: Hillsdale County GIS
Printed: January 2021



KATHE AND CALI PARK

Kathe and Cali Park was given to Hillsdale County in 2000. It has a nice swing set, 3 picnic tables, and a grill. Maintenance is performed by a person living next to the park. It is a neighborhood park.

Kathe and Cali Park

Conservation Park

9.877 acres

Service Area-local residents

Playground equipment

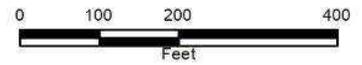
Picnic area



HILLSDALE COUNTY

Hillsdale, Michigan

Kathe & Cali Park



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LEWIS EMERY PARK

Lewis Emery Park consists of 98 acres, including 6 ponds ranging in size from 1 acre to 15 acres. It was originally rearing ponds for the DNR and was given to Hillsdale County by the State of Michigan in 1961 when the DNR no longer grew fingerlings there. It is the largest and most developed of the county parks.

It has a community building of 2,100 square feet built in 1995. In the park are two covered pavilions, two sets of playground equipment, two nature trails, a softball field, a small basketball court, picnic areas, and superb fishing. The park is used every year by the Hillsdale Kiwanis Club to introduce kids to fishing on Michigan's free fishing day for kids. A cross country event is held every year for the 9 local schools and draws large crowds. It is a community park.

Lewis Emery Park

- Conservation Park
- 98 acres
- Service Area-southern Michigan, northern Ohio, and northern Indiana
- 6 fishing ponds
- Community building
- 2 trails
- 2 playgrounds
- Softball and basketball

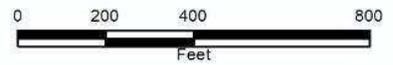




HILLSDALE COUNTY

Hillsdale, Michigan

Lewis Emery Park



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COURTHOUSE LAWN PARK

Courthouse Lawn Park is a beautiful park in downtown Hillsdale. It has a pavilion, fountain, veteran memorials, benches, picnic tables, and is shaded with many trees. It is a very relaxing place to go for lunch or just to relax on a busy day. It is a mini park.

Courthouse Lawn Park

Recreation park

1 acre

Service Area-local residents and anyone who visits downtown Hillsdale

Pavilion

Benches

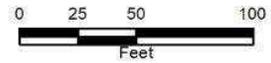
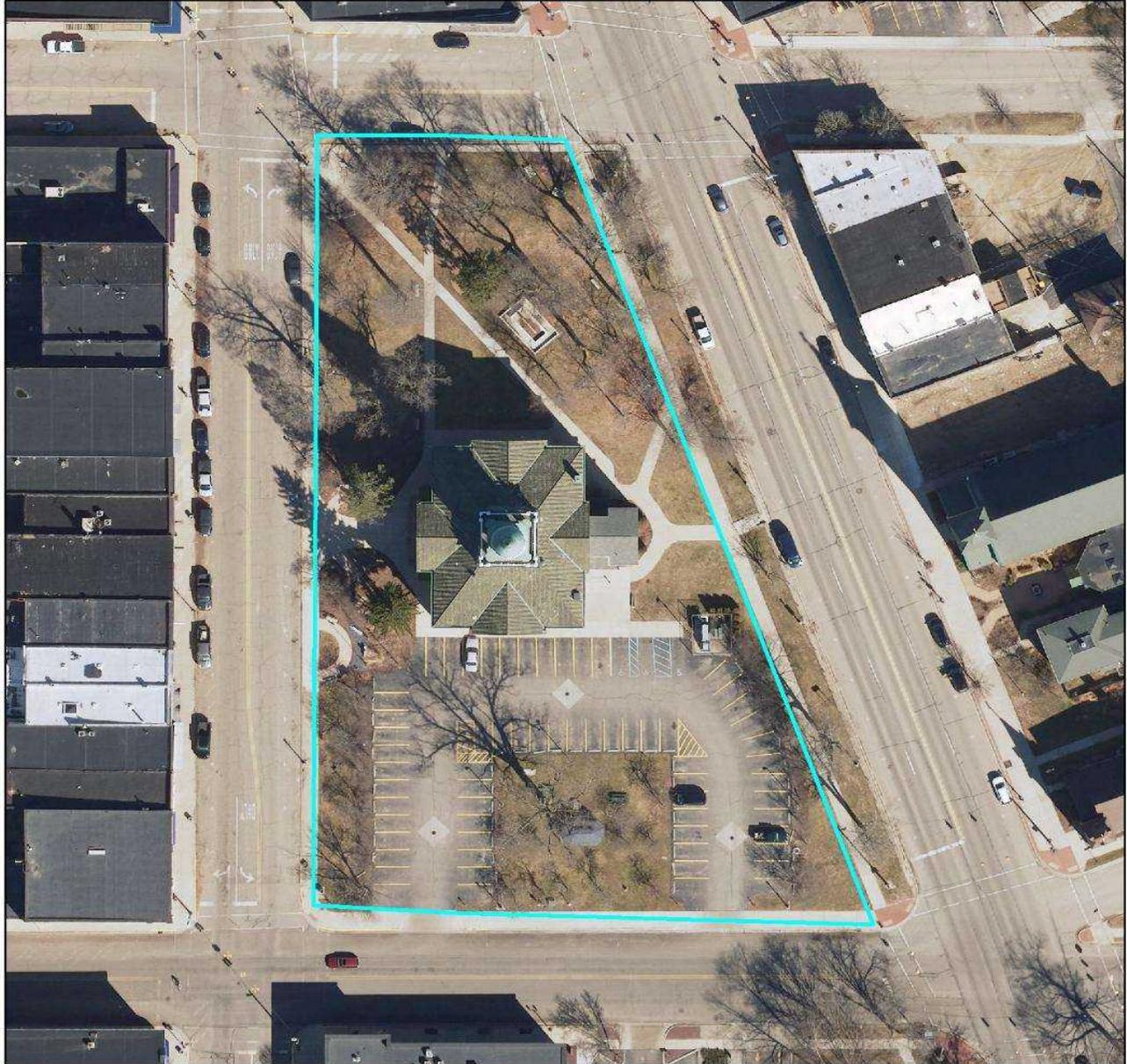
Picnic Table

War Memorials





HILLSDALE COUNTY
Hillsdale, Michigan
Hillsdale County Courthouse Square



Created by: Hillsdale County GIS
Printed: January 2021



Figure 7

HILLSDALE COUNTY RECREATION INVENTORY

| | Lewis Emery | Hemlock Beach | Bird Lake | Kathe-Cali | Courthouse |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Ball Diamond | x | | | | |
| Basketball Court | x | | | | |
| Fishing Pier | x | | | | |
| Pavilion | x | x | | | x |
| Playground | x | x | | x | |
| Restroom Building | x | | | | x |
| River or lake access | x | | x | | |
| Swimming beach | | | x | | |
| Trails | x | | | | |
| Acreage | 98 | 1.25 | 0.17 | 9.877 | 1.0 |

GRANT STATUS REPORT

Hillsdale County has received a Proposal D Recreation grant through the DNR and it was used to build the Community Building at Lewis Emery Park. Hillsdale County also received a grant from the USA Land and Water Conservation Fund to develop a portion of Lewis Emery Park with a softball field, pavilion, playground, picnic tables, grills and a basketball court. The park and associated improvements, related to the two grants, are still open and operational. In addition, two Inland Fisheries grants were received about 30 years ago to dredge some of the ponds at Lewis Emery Park. Those ponds need to be dredged again. A complete history is given in the appendix A.

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 American Disabilities Association (ADA) to easily identify those parks and facilities which are most and least handicap accessible and usable, based on the ADA guidelines. The accessibility grading system uses a five point system ranging from one, none of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines, to five, the entire park was developed/renovated using the principals of universal design.

An Americans with Disabilities Act(ADA) compliance assessment of Hillsdale County parks was conducted in early 2021. The assessment consisted of a visual inspection of each park in regards to access and circulation in relation to the park facilities. This includes accessible parking, paths, restrooms, activity areas, amenities, and signage.

Kathe-Cali park is a playground and picnic area and meets no ADA guidelines. Hemlock Beach park has a pavilion, which is not handicap accessible. Bird Lake park is for swimming only and is not handicap accessible for entering the water. The Courthouse Lawn park is open to handicap trails through it and to the veterans memorials, and has handicap accessible parking. Lewis Emery park is handicap accessible to the community building. It also has handicap accessible parking. The fishing docks are not handicapped accessible and that is one thing the parks commission would like to change.

Conversations were held with SPARC and Key Opportunities. SPARC is a group that provides social activities for physically and mentally impaired people. Key Opportunities is a sheltered workshop for the same clientele. Both organizations were in agreement with the goals stated in the action plan for increased accessibility for the disabled. In addition, they indicated there should be hand bars on the approaches to the new docks in Lewis Emery Park.

The Hillsdale County Planning Commission has recommended that the county adopt this recreation plan in its Master Plan update. The resolution is included in Appendix D.

Figure 8

**ADA ACCESSIBILITY GRADING SYSTEM
FOR PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

| Accessibility Grade | Definition | Hillsdale County Park |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | None of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines | Bird Lake, Kathe-Cali, Hemlock Beach |
| 2 | Some of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines | Lewis Emery |
| 3 | Most of the facilities/park areas meet accessibility guidelines | Courthouse Lawn |
| 4 | The entire park meets accessibility guidelines | |
| 5 | The entire park was developed/renovated using the principles of universal design | |

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

When studying parks and recreation resources in a community, it can be worthwhile to examine natural resources that may be in need of conservation or protection. In Hillsdale County the most significant resources would most likely be the rivers and lakes.

Hillsdale County is home to over 4,300 acres of lakes that present excellent opportunities for fishing, swimming, and boating. More than 70 lakes are over 10 acres in size and over a dozen of them are over 100 acres in size. The largest lake, Baw Beese, is over 400 acres in size and lies just southeast of the City of Hillsdale. In addition, Hillsdale County is the only county in Michigan without water flowing in from other areas. An abundance of spring and lake fresh water form the beginning of five rivers. The 1,200 foot elevation in Hillsdale County generates the headwaters for five major river systems;

1. The St. Joseph River begins at Baw Beese lake and flows through southern Michigan and northern Indiana all the way to Lake Michigan.
2. The Kalamazoo and Grand Rivers both travel north and west into Lake Michigan.
3. The St. Joseph River of the Maumee moves east and empties into Lake Erie.
4. The River Raisin starts in northeastern Hillsdale County and reaches Lake Erie at Monroe, Michigan.

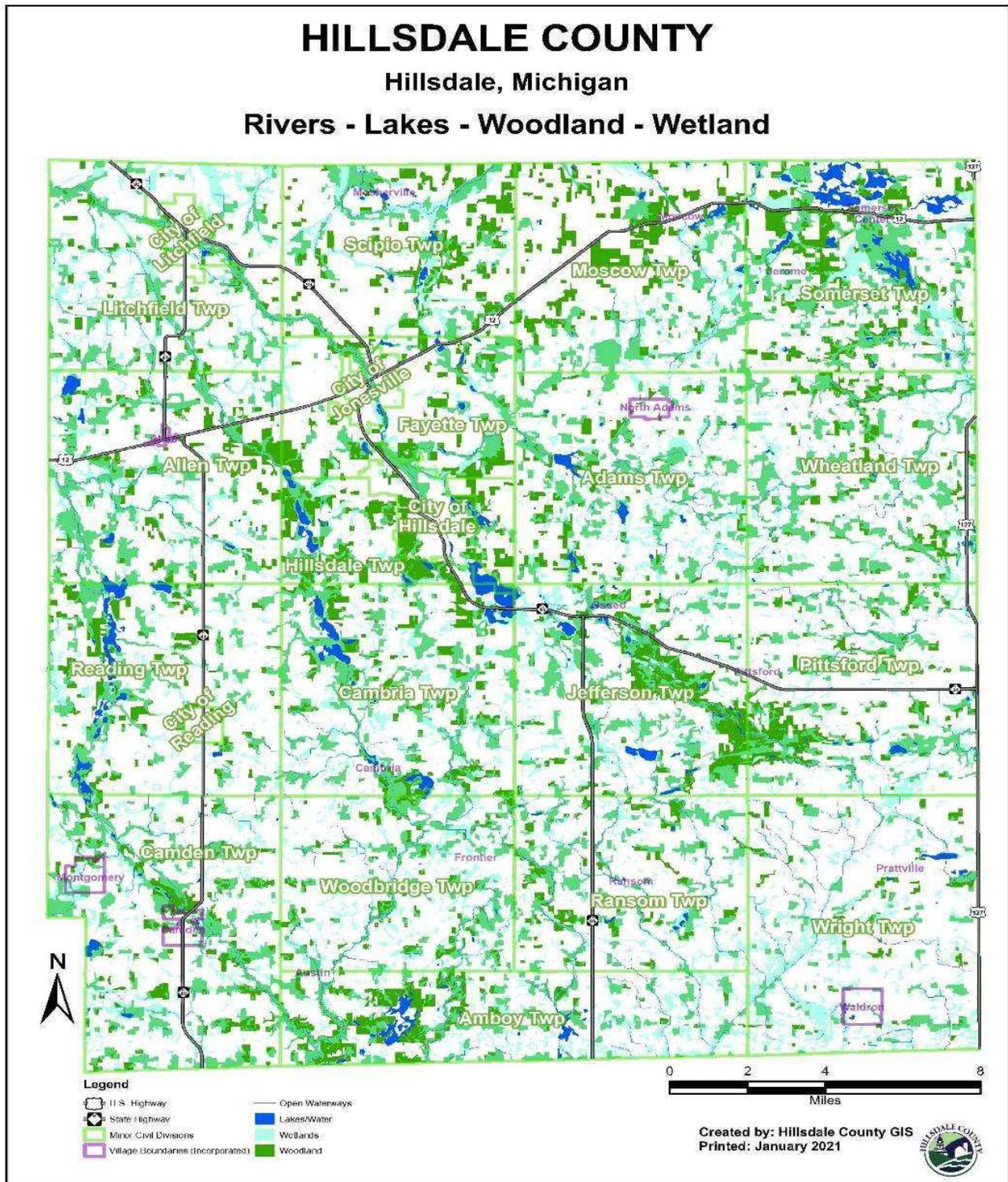
Lost Nations State Game Area is located south of Pittsford and Osseo. This area contains delightful forests, wildflowers, ponds, and a meandering stream. A portion of the North Country Scenic Trail runs through this area. Hunting, hiking, fishing, and shooting sports can all be enjoyed in this area.

Hillsdale County is a bird watchers paradise with more than 260 species of birds. Often seen are wild turkey, swan, warbler, crane, heron, owl, and pheasant. Occasionally, birds of prey are sighted, including the osprey and bald eagle. A migratory bird sanctuary is located in Somerset State Game Area.

Fishing is also very popular in Hillsdale County with pike, perch, bluegills, crappie, muskie, and catfish being plentiful. Trout and walleye are also found in some lakes. Ice fishing is popular and Tip Offs are held every year. Two free fishing weekends are held each year in the summer and in the winter at Lewis Emery Park. License fees are waived although fishing regulations still apply.

Figure 9 depicts lakes and rivers in Hillsdale County.

Figure 9



OTHER PARKS IN HILLSDALE COUNTY

The Hillsdale County visitor guide lists a multitude of other parks in the county that are supported by local cities, villages, townships, and even Hillsdale College. There are 48 of these parks altogether, and many have picnic areas, playgrounds, and restroom facilities. Owen Memorial Park, Waterworks Park, and Sandy Beach have swimming and boat launching available in Hillsdale, and Simpson Park in Litchfield offers swimming as well.

Another recreation facility is the Hillsdale County fairgrounds which operates year round and has preserved the flavor of the old time agricultural fairs, which were very common in Michigan's past.

Another major park/recreation facility is the North Country Scenic Trail. It is a joint venture on the part of the City of Hillsdale and Jonesville, along with the townships of Fayette and Hillsdale. The trail through Hillsdale County is a part of the larger North Country trail that extends to the upper peninsula of Michigan.

The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends 1 park for every 2,281 residents. This would mean at least 20 parks should exist in Hillsdale County. There are over 48 parks in the county. Five of these are county parks, but all have playgrounds and picnic areas at a minimum. These parks are owned by cities, villages, and townships within the county.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Listening to Hillsdale County Residents and Park Users

One of the most important aspects of a community's recreation plan is the inclusion of the resident's opinions about how they view the future of their parks and recreation system. Hillsdale County created an online community survey to gather the information which would guide their parks and recreation program for the next 5 years. A complete tabulation of the results is available for review in Appendix B. The text below provides a description of significant results.

A second means of input was provided during the required public review period held between and May 4 and June 9, 2021, and concluding with the public meeting on June 9, 2021.

COMMUNITY INPUT SURVEY PROCESS

Hillsdale County developed an online survey that was made available from Survey Monkey.

The public was made aware of this survey in various ways:

1. An email with a link to the survey was sent to County officials, township officials, and staff.
2. A link to the survey was placed on the County's web page.
3. An article was written in the local newspaper about the survey with the link included.
4. The local radio station repeatedly mentioned the story about the survey and included the link
5. The survey link was also placed on other web pages such as cities and the Economic Development Partnership.

COMMUNITY INPUT RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Responses were gathered from about 196 people.

GOALS

Guiding Principles

Developing goals and objectives is an important part of the recreation planning process. The overall goal of a parks and recreation department is to provide recreation opportunities for the community and/or region it serves. More specific goals must be based on the demographic characteristics of the population served, the physical and environmental characteristics, and the input of the community.

Hillsdale County's recreational facilities bring people together and add a sense of civic pride and belonging. Maintaining and updating park and recreational facilities will preserve the value and popularity of the County's park system. Demographic and lifestyle changes will lead to new demands such as for more accessible walking trails, better fishing opportunities, more handicap accessible opportunities, and more up to date playground equipment.

Goals are the broadest level. They are overreaching and general. Objectives carry out the purpose of the goal. The Action Program is the last level and it identifies specific projects and programs. The Action Program can include organizational, staffing, programming, public information, and operation and maintenance actions. Hillsdale County formulated the following goals and objectives based upon the characteristics of the overall community, the input received at the community input sessions, and the survey.

Goal 1 – Promote and provide diverse recreational opportunities to satisfy all age groups and levels of ability. These recreational opportunities shall inspire personal growth, healthy lifestyles, and a sense of community.

Objective: Provide recreational opportunities for all people, including those with disabilities.

Objective: Add new amenities to Hillsdale County park facilities based upon community input.

Goal 2 – Develop sustainable opportunities that take advantage of the lakes and woodlands in Hillsdale County.

Objective: Encourage environmental education opportunities in Hillsdale County Parks.

Goal 3 – Retain public land for future generations.

Objective: Retain existing parkland to meet the recreational needs of the community.

Goal 4 – Promote and enhance the financial stability of Hillsdale County Parks.

Goal 5 – Create community awareness of Hillsdale County recreational opportunities and promote them to citizens.

Objective: Use the county website and others to communicate with the public about Hillsdale County park facilities and events.

Objective: Consider other opportunities for advertising and promotion.

Goal 6 – Maintain and improve existing facilities to meet the needs of park users.

Objective: Upgrade park facilities where needed.

Objective: Maintain the viability of the 6 ponds at Lewis Emery for fishing.

ACTION PLAN

Planning for improvements

With goals and objectives in place, Hillsdale County was able to develop a 5-year action program to work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives. The Action Program details the direction the community wishes to take over the next five years in order to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of area parks and recreation opportunities.

Potential projects were assigned a priority of 1 through 14 with 1 being most important and 14 being least important. Each action item relates to one or more of the numbered goals from the previous section. Potential capital improvements described in this Plan have been established not only to provide a framework for decision makers but also to enable the County to apply for grant funding for these proposed projects.

The project list is not a fixed element and it is neither all inclusive nor exclusive. The schedule reflects the results of the input received from the on-line survey, County staff, and the community open house. Future circumstances, especially availability of funding, may change priorities or require re-prioritization of items.

The Action Plan is shown in the table below.

Financing potential improvements

Funding for parks and recreation capital improvements can come from a range of local, state, and federal programs. Grant funding is available for parks and recreation projects. However, applicants need to target potential funding agencies and programs carefully so as to meet the specific criteria required. Appendix C contains a current listing of programs and agencies that can provide funding for parks and recreation projects.

HILLSDALE COUNTY PARKS ACTION ITEMS 2021-2025

| Priority | Action Item | Purpose | Location | Relates to Goal |
|-----------------|--|---|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Aluminum Docks handicap accessible | Infrastructure up-grade, fishing access | Lewis Emery | 1,6 |
| 2 | Dredge ponds 1,4 anti-erosion shores | Improve fishing | Lewis Emery | 1,6 |
| 10 | Signage for bathrooms | Park Users | Lewis Emery | 6 |
| 6 | Handicap accessible water entrance Rebuild sea wall | Infrastructure Upgrade | Bird Lake | 1,6 |
| 3 | Dredge ponds 5,6 anti erosion shores | Improve fishing | Lewis Emery | 1,6 |
| 8 | More security cameras | Safety | Lewis Emery | 6 |
| 9 | Picnic tables, grills, benches | Functionality | All parks | 6 |
| 5 | Rebuild Fountain | Improve user experience | Courthouse lawn | 6 |
| 11 | Dredge ponds 2,3 | Improve fishing | Lewis Emery | 1,6 |
| 12 | Rebuild waterfall | Infrastructure | Lewis Emery | 6 |
| 4 | Upgrade trails, make handicap accessible | Recreation | Lewis Emery | 1,2, |
| 7 | Parking, trails | Recreation, accessibility | Kathe-Cali | 1,3,6 |
| 13 | Refurbish playground, add side-walks | Recreation, accessibility | Hemlock Beach | 1,6 |
| 14 | Run city water | Infrastructure upgrade | Lewis Emery | 6 |

SUMMARY OF THE PLANNING PROCESS & ADOPTION

A Plan supported by the Community

In its effort to provide quality recreational opportunities for its citizens, Hillsdale County has developed this Parks and Recreational Master Plan as a tool to guide the development of community park and recreational facilities and locations over the next five years. This plan is an effort by the local government officials in Hillsdale County to establish recreational goals and objectives for the community. The plan will also provide the County with eligibility for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to assist the community in reaching its recreational goals.

Hillsdale County contracted with Bruce Caswell, a local grant writer, to assist them with the completion of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Bruce worked with the Hillsdale County staff and Parks Trustees through the course of the plan and would like to thank them for their help.

Data was collected about the County including maps, demographics, park information and an inventory of existing facilities. The data was collected from county staff, field observations, various websites, and other relevant planning documents. The National Recreation and Parks Association indicates that Hillsdale County should have 9.9 acres of park for every 1,000 residents or 1 park for every 2,281 residents. While the county park system meets neither of these criteria currently, the second criteria is easily met if all public parks in the county are counted.

Community input was collected via an on-line survey conducted in the winter of 2021. Based on community input and existing information, Hillsdale County developed goals and objectives for parks and recreation. Then, action plan items were written that would work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives.

The consultant completed the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan document and it was made available for review on the Hillsdale County website and at the Hillsdale County Road Commission office, as well as the County Clerk's office for at least 30 days beginning on May 4, 2021. The reviewing opportunity was advertised in the Hillsdale Tip Off guide. The final opportunity for community input occurred at the advertised public meeting held prior to the adoption of the plan. The meeting was held on June 9, 2021 at the Hillsdale County Road Commission offices at 1919 Hudson Rd. Hillsdale, Mi.

On June 9, 2021 the Hillsdale County Parks Trustees passed a resolution recommending that the County formally adopt the plan. On June 22, 2021 the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution adopting the recreation plan. Copies of the advertisements and resolutions are included in Appendix D.

Appendix A – Recreation Grant History

| Year | Grant | Amount | Park |
|------|---|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1990 | Inland Fisheries Pond 4 dredging Warrant number 47862087 | \$20,000 | Lewis Emery |
| 1992 | Inland Fisheries Pond 5 dredging | \$20,000 | Lewis Emery |
| 1994 | Proposal D Recreation Construct a new Community Building | \$175,500 Grant number BF-062 | Lewis Emery |
| 1989 | Nick Smith Allocation Rebuild draw down stacks for the ponds | \$30,000 | Lewis Emery |
| 1979 | Land and Water Conservation Build pit restroom, 10 picnic tables, 5 grills, softball field, playground, trail LWCF 26-01060M3 | \$10,000 | Lewis Emery |
| 1988 | Local Money Pond 1 dredging | \$5,000 | Lewis Emery |

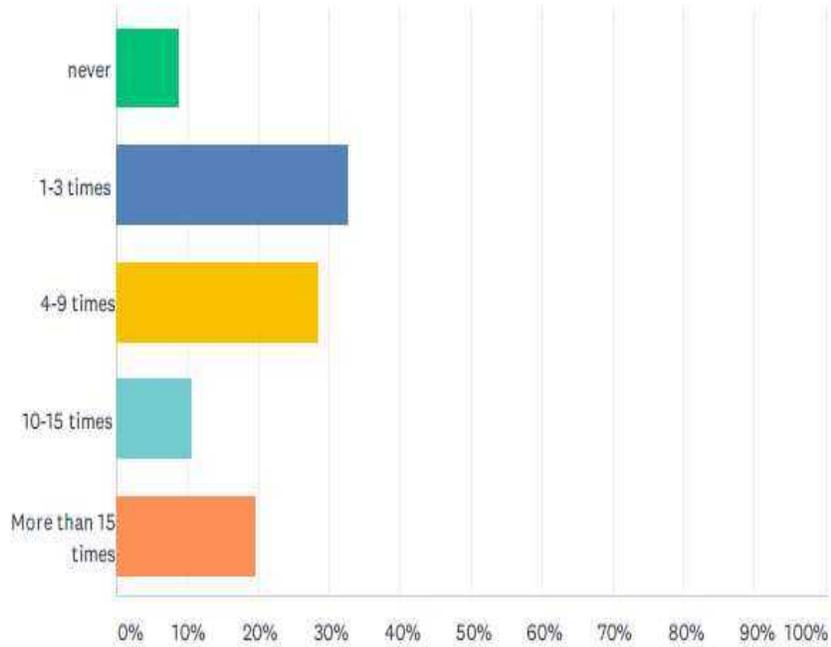
The following grants were all awarded by the Hillsdale County Community Foundation

| | | | |
|------|---|----------|-------------|
| 1994 | Community Building Part of local match | \$7,000 | Lewis Emery |
| 1996 | Improvements Playground, swing slides, 12 picnic tables, 16 grills | \$6,676 | Lewis Emery |
| 2003 | Gazebo/shelter | \$10,834 | Lewis Emery |
| 2007 | Flotation markers | \$700 | Bird Lake |

Appendix B – Online Survey Results

Q1 How many times have you or your family used a Hillsdale County park in the past year?

Answered: 193 Skipped: 1

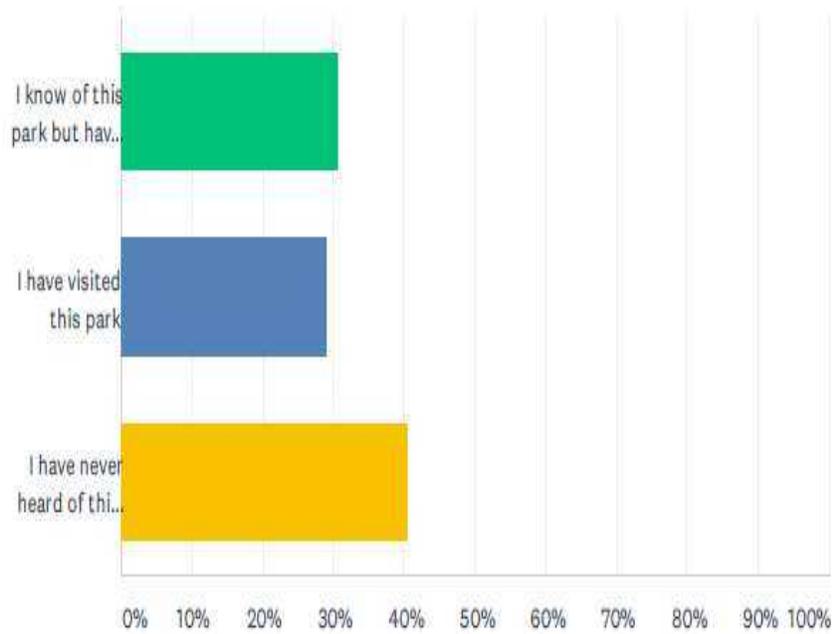


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| never | 8.81% | 17 |
| 1-3 times | 32.64% | 63 |
| 4-9 times | 28.50% | 55 |
| 10-15 times | 10.36% | 20 |
| More than 15 times | 19.69% | 38 |
| TOTAL | | 193 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q2 Please indicate your familiarity with the Hillsdale County Bird Lake Park.

Answered: 193 Skipped: 1

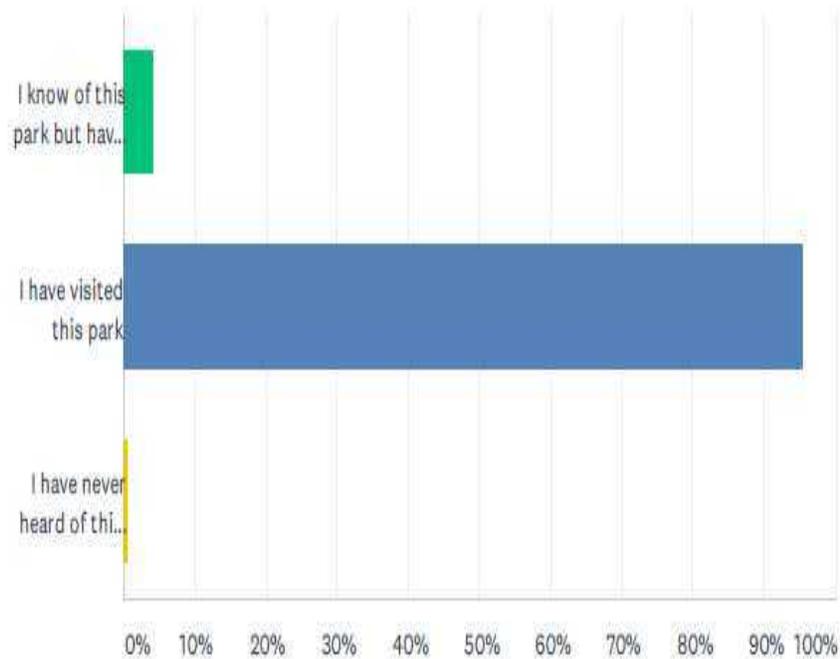


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| I know of this park but have not visited it | 30.57% | 59 |
| I have visited this park | 29.02% | 56 |
| I have never heard of this park | 40.41% | 78 |
| TOTAL | | 193 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q3 Please indicate your familiarity with the Hillsdale County Lewis Emery Park.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 0

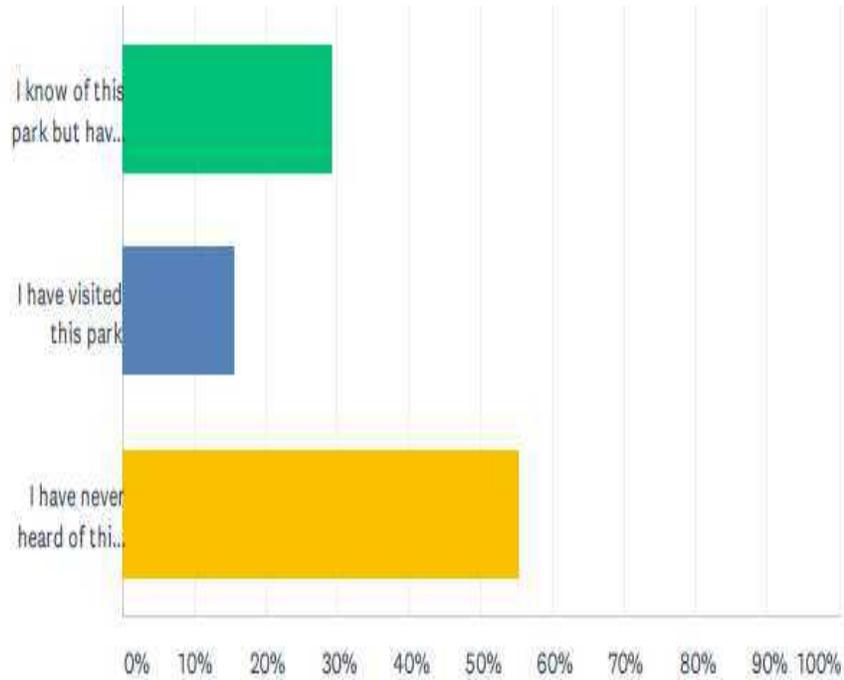


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|---|------------|
| I know of this park but have not visited it | 4.12% 8 |
| I have visited this park | 95.36% 185 |
| I have never heard of this park | 0.52% 1 |
| TOTAL | 194 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q4 Please indicate your familiarity with the Hillsdale County Hemlock Park.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 0

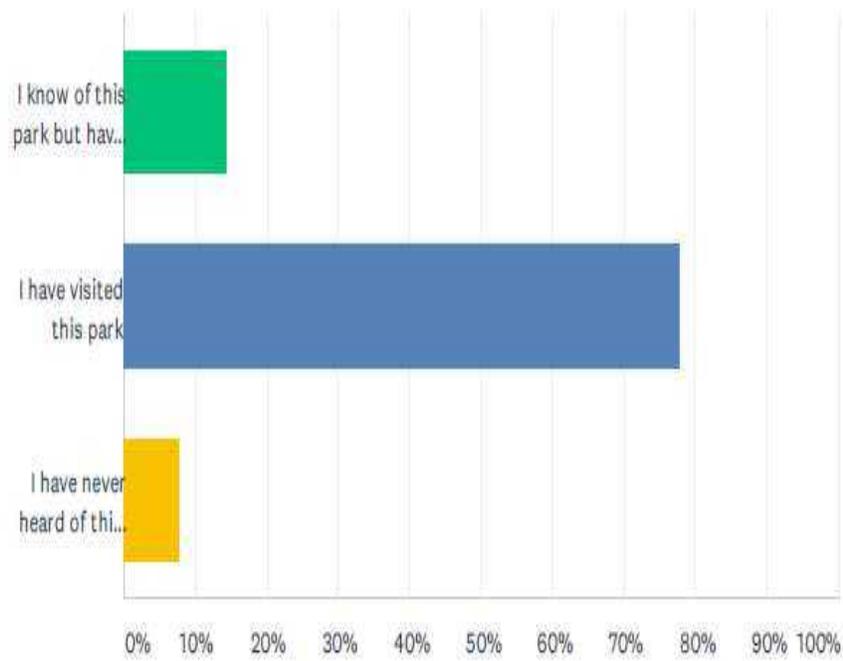


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|-----|
| I know of this park but have not visited it. | 29.38% | 57 |
| I have visited this park | 15.46% | 30 |
| I have never heard of this park | 55.15% | 107 |
| TOTAL | | 194 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q5 Please indicate your familiarity with the Hillsdale Courthouse Grounds Park.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 0

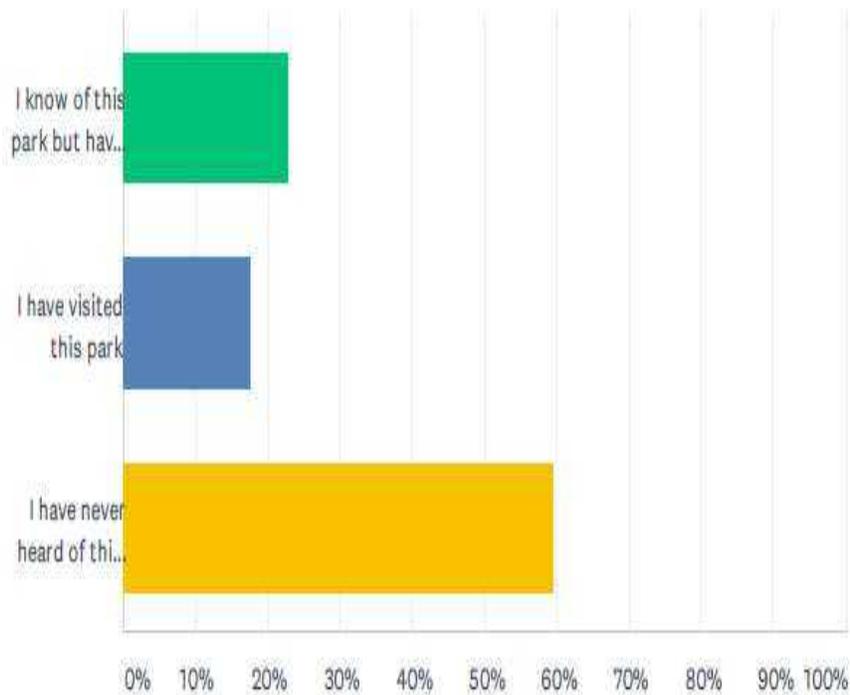


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| I know of this park but have not visited it | 14.43% | 28 |
| I have visited this park | 77.84% | 151 |
| I have never heard of this park | 7.73% | 15 |
| TOTAL | | 194 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q6 Please indicate your familiarity with the Hillsdale County Kathe-Cali Park.

Answered: 193 Skipped: 1

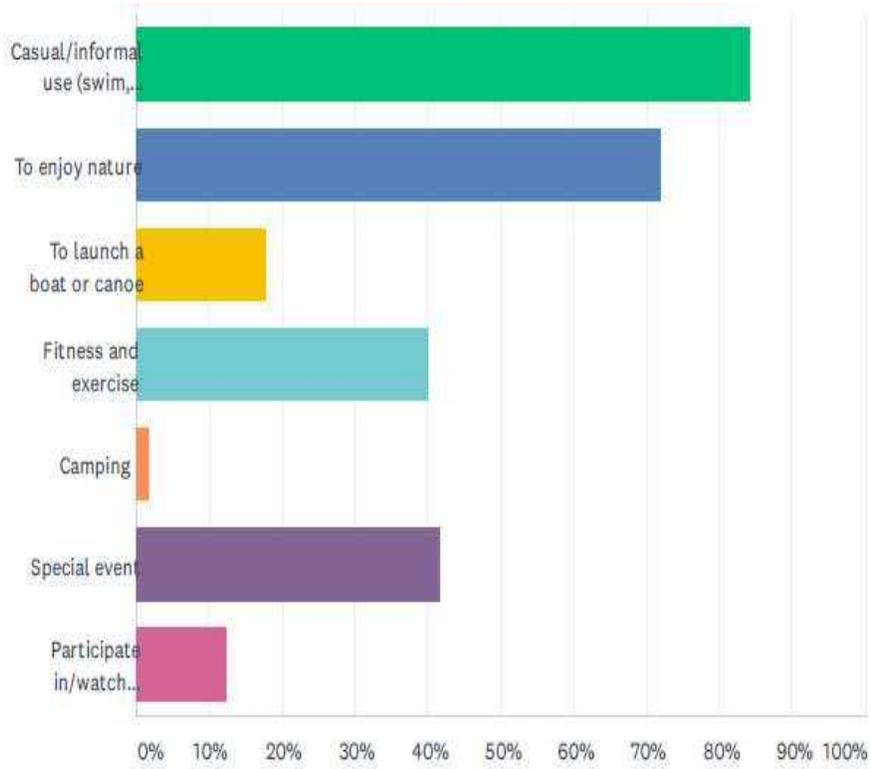


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| I know of this park but have not visited it | 22.80% | 44 |
| I have visited this park | 17.62% | 34 |
| I have never heard of this park | 59.59% | 115 |
| TOTAL | | 193 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q7 Why do you and/or your family visit Hillsdale County parks?

Answered: 185 Skipped: 9



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Casual/informal use (swim, picnic, playground) | 84.32% | 156 |
| To enjoy nature | 71.89% | 133 |
| To launch a boat or canoe | 17.84% | 33 |
| Fitness and exercise | 40.00% | 74 |
| Camping | 1.62% | 3 |
| Special event | 41.62% | 77 |
| Participate in/watch athletic events | 12.43% | 23 |
| Total Respondents: 185 | | |

Q8 What additional facilities/amenities would you like to see added to Hillsdale County parks?

Answered: 129 Skipped: 65

1. Trash cans and bathrooms.
2. More swim areas.
3. Just keeping them clean and well-maintained.
4. Bathrooms.
5. Updated playgrounds, benches for seating.
6. I would like to buy Hemlock park land.
7. Public pool, dog park.
8. Walking paths to see the whole park.
9. Wheelchair accessible swings and accessible ramps.
10. Bathrooms. Updated playground.
11. Ice skating, tennis.
12. Pool.
13. Amenities for handicapped children in wheelchairs or not.
14. More pavilions.
15. Splash pad, skateboard area, hiking trails.
16. Dog park, skateboard park.
17. Dog park.
18. Playground equipment, restrooms.
19. Identified parking around the park-thinking of Lewis Emery.
20. More things for kids. Fun playgrounds or other kid-friendly things.
21. Hiking trails.
22. A fitness area.
23. Dog park.
24. Volleyball courts.
25. Drinking fountains.
26. Nice bathroom facilities.
27. Public pool.
28. Usable, unlocked bathroom facilities.
29. Having shaded areas, benches, tables, and good clean restrooms helps with a variety of activities/functions.
30. Dog walk, skate park.
31. Disc golf, basketball court, Gazebo or other covered structure.
32. Better restroom.
33. Perhaps more info about the group of parks, I only knew of two.
34. Food truck roundup event, volunteer park cleanup events, Hillsdale College volunteer interpretive hikes.
35. Something family oriented.

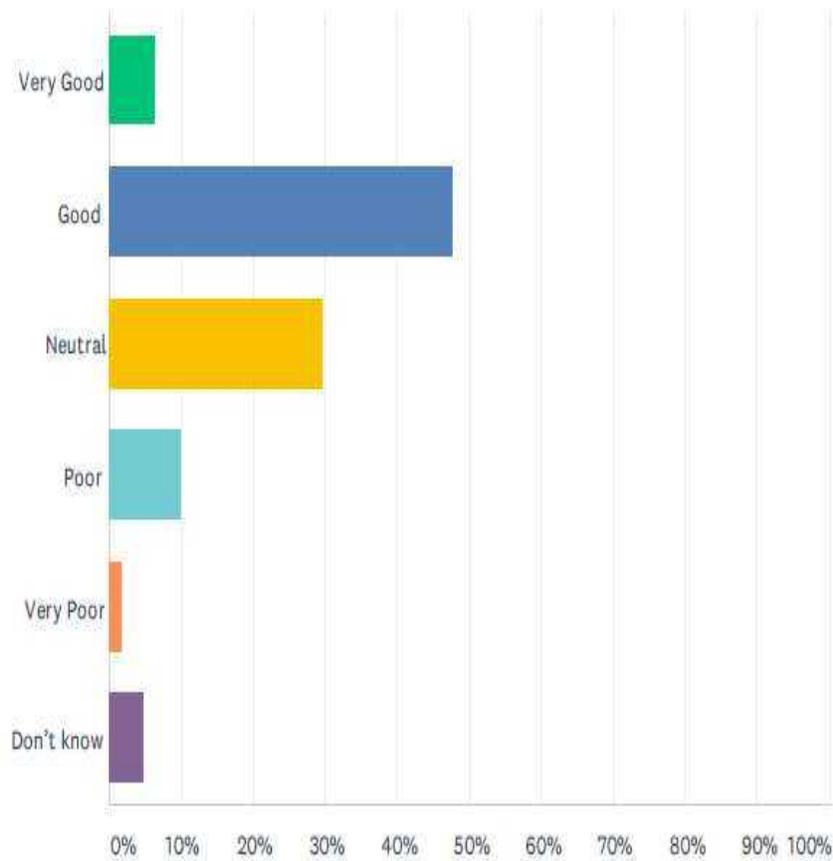
36. Flowers planted.
37. Bathroom.
38. More disc golf.
39. Another disc golf course would be great. Fully functional bathrooms at some of the bigger parks.
40. Pickle ball courts please.
41. Canoe/kayak rentals.
42. Grounds need cleaned. Would like some seating by the lake to enjoy.
43. Fishing, skate/bike park playgrounds.
44. Pickle ball courts. 5 or 6 courts to start with. You would be amazed how much use they would get.
45. More affordable rentals and pavilions regular bathrooms. Going to parks without some type of bathrooms shortens time spent at the parks.
46. Updated play area for kids.
47. More playground equipment.
48. More picnic tables. Stop cutting down trees.
49. A park more designed for younger children that isn't so close to the water.
50. I would love to see the rearing ponds put back into service again. It is a beautiful park to take the kids and teach them about wildlife and nature.
51. Bathrooms.
52. A water pad and dog park.
53. Good quality benches and tables.
54. Ball fields upgraded.
55. More things for kids to play on.
56. A splash pad for the people in the summer. Updated playground equipment.
57. More accessible fishing at Lewis Emery park. Fix docks, clean weeds/brush. It's a beautiful place but it needs a little more attention and my family and I would love to volunteer to help, as we go there multiple times a week.
58. Horse shoe pits/cement corn hole boards.
59. More educational signs. More advertising.
60. Little kid activities.
61. Public restrooms.
62. Pickle ball courts.
63. Need pickle ball courts in the county.
64. Pickle ball courts.
65. Lewis Emery Park has been very busy and needs the upper trail covered with wood chips. Lots of trees and brush need trimmed. Picnic tables need painting and docks repaired. The park has been a must for people during the pandemic. The park does not require lots of new amenities, it just needs a good face lift.
66. Clean bathrooms.
67. More walk-able trails.
68. More picnic shelters.
69. 8 pickle ball courts.
70. Splash pad.
71. Proper bathrooms.
72. Benches.
73. More bike trails.
74. Restrooms.
75. Better restrooms and more parking.

76. Trail systems. Porta-Johns cleaned on a more frequent basis.
77. Covered pavilions at all parks.
78. Restrooms and nice playground equipment.
79. Playground and picnic equipment.
80. I love the woodsy parks and the rearing ponds with platforms.
81. I love the walking trails-gives people working in town somewhere outdoors to enjoy during lunch or break time.
82. Bathrooms.
83. Bathrooms.
84. More playgrounds and picnic areas.
85. Camp sites for campers.
86. More pavilions and bathrooms.
87. Would like a dog friendly area for pets to play.
88. Nature trails, additional picnic facilities, play grounds.
89. Open Bird Lake Beach back up...restrooms, playgrounds, food trucks.
90. Special events like music and performers.
91. Bathrooms.
92. Rest rooms, picnic tables, grills, play ground equipment.
93. Landscaping, put cap stones on the entrance sign at Lewis Emery..it looks unfinished and will protect the mortar holding the pillars together. Update the fishing docks on the breeding ponds with poly wood.
94. Improve cleanliness. Deal with geese and trash.
95. I would like to see more grills and seating areas. Also some kind of skate park added to one of the parks. Adding some kind of bike trails would be great as well. Also more fishing spots. I have many more ideas.
96. Good outdoor toilets.

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q9 Please evaluate the following aspects of Hillsdale County Parks:
Variety of Facilities/amenities.

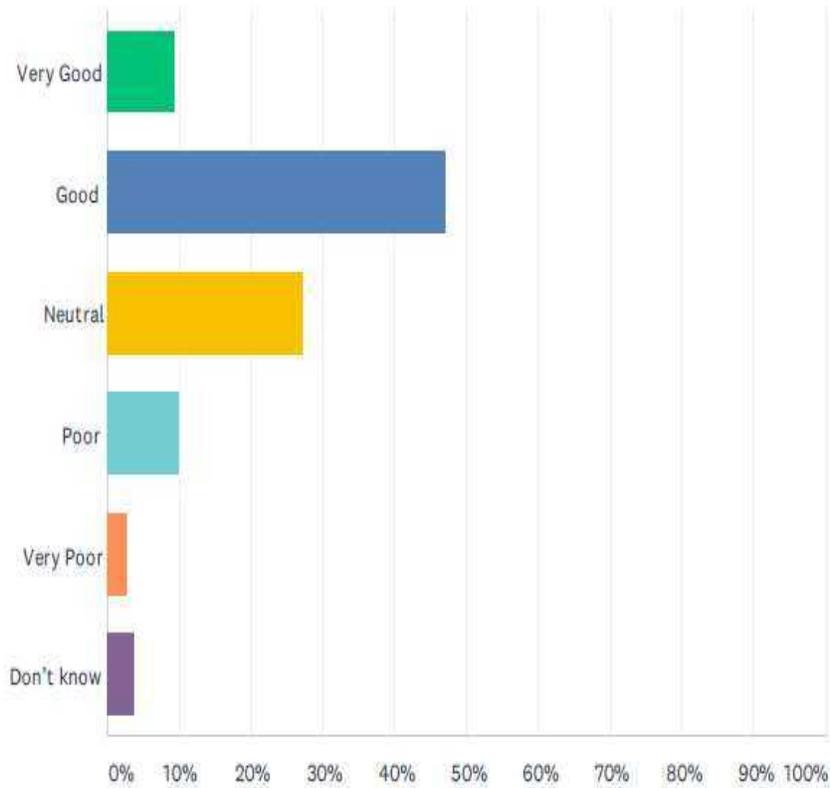
Answered: 189 Skipped: 5



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Very Good | 6.35% | 12 |
| Good | 47.62% | 90 |
| Neutral | 29.63% | 56 |
| Poor | 10.05% | 19 |
| Very Poor | 1.59% | 3 |
| Don't know | 4.76% | 9 |
| TOTAL | | 189 |

Q10 Please evaluate the following aspects of Hillsdale County Parks: Maintenance and Appearance

Answered: 191 Skipped: 3

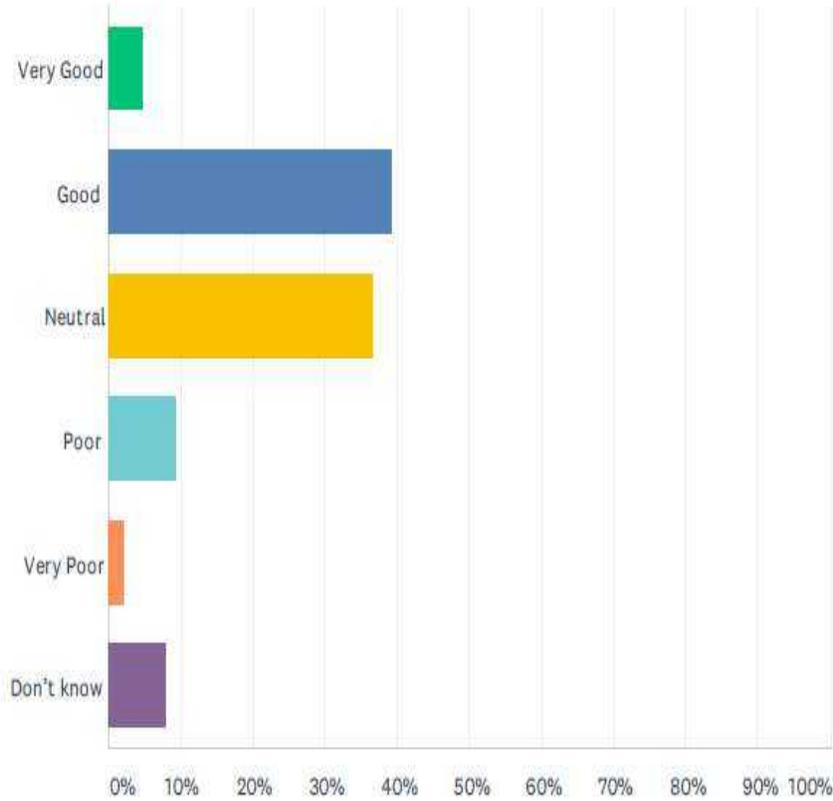


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Very Good | 9.42% | 18 |
| Good | 47.12% | 90 |
| Neutral | 27.23% | 52 |
| Poor | 9.95% | 19 |
| Very Poor | 2.62% | 5 |
| Don't know | 3.66% | 7 |
| TOTAL | | 191 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q11 Please evaluate the following aspects of Hillsdale County Parks:
Safety and Security

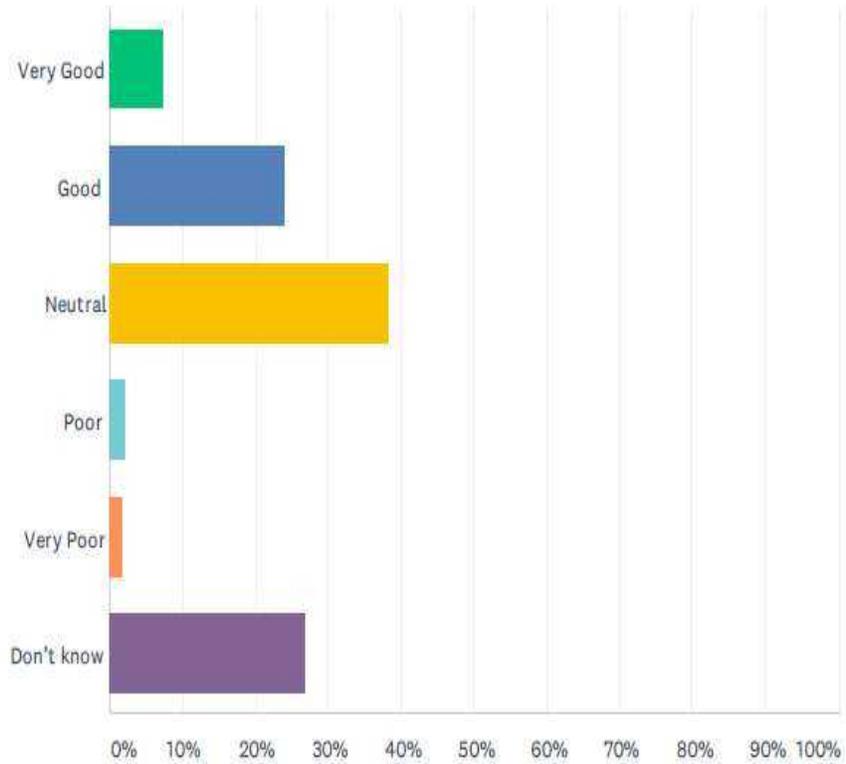
Answered: 191 Skipped: 3



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Very Good | 4.71% | 9 |
| Good | 39.27% | 75 |
| Neutral | 36.65% | 70 |
| Poor | 9.42% | 18 |
| Very Poor | 2.09% | 4 |
| Don't know | 7.85% | 15 |
| TOTAL | | 191 |

Q12 Please evaluate the following aspects of Hillsdale County Parks:
Quality/Friendliness of Staff

Answered: 191 Skipped: 3

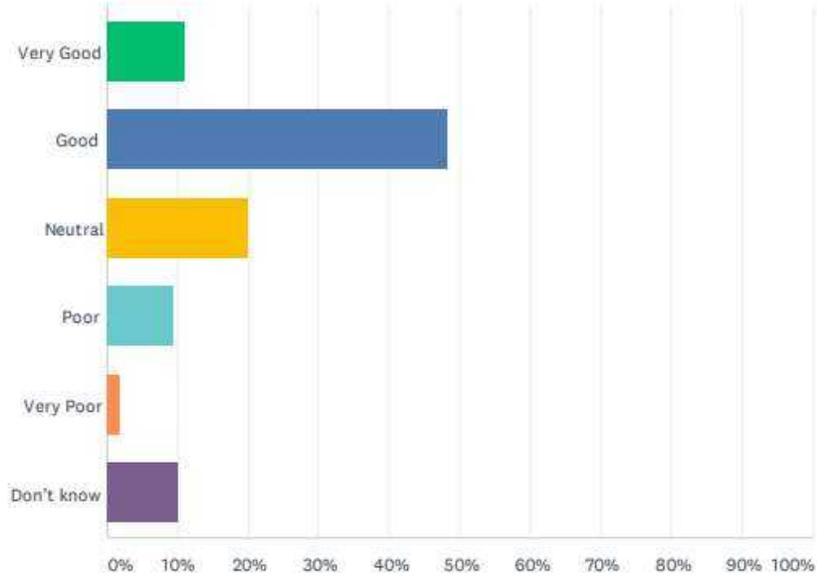


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Very Good | 7.33% | 14 |
| Good | 24.08% | 46 |
| Neutral | 38.22% | 73 |
| Poor | 2.09% | 4 |
| Very Poor | 1.57% | 3 |
| Don't know | 26.70% | 51 |
| TOTAL | | 191 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q13 Please evaluate the following aspects of Hillsdale County Parks:
Water Accessibility (where applicable)

Answered: 191 Skipped: 3

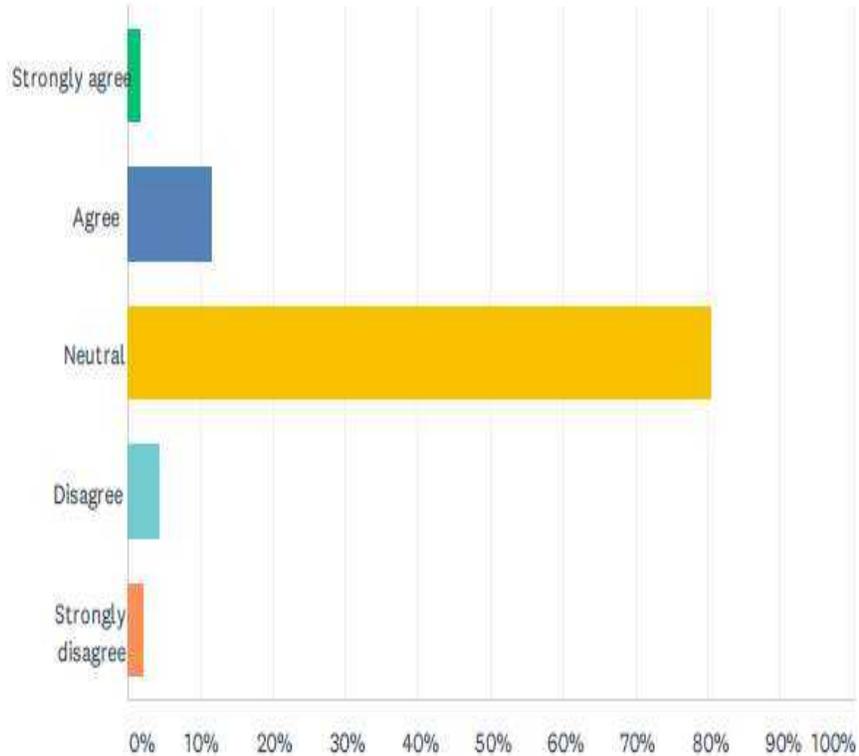


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Very Good | 10.99% | 21 |
| Good | 48.17% | 92 |
| Neutral | 19.90% | 38 |
| Poor | 9.42% | 18 |
| Very Poor | 1.57% | 3 |
| Don't know | 9.95% | 19 |
| TOTAL | | 191 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q14 Do you feel the Bird Lake Park area is satisfactory?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 10



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 1.63% | 3 |
| Agree | 11.41% | 21 |
| Neutral | 80.43% | 148 |
| Disagree | 4.35% | 8 |
| Strongly disagree | 2.17% | 4 |
| TOTAL | | 184 |

Q15 Please give any additional feedback for Bird Lake Park you may have.

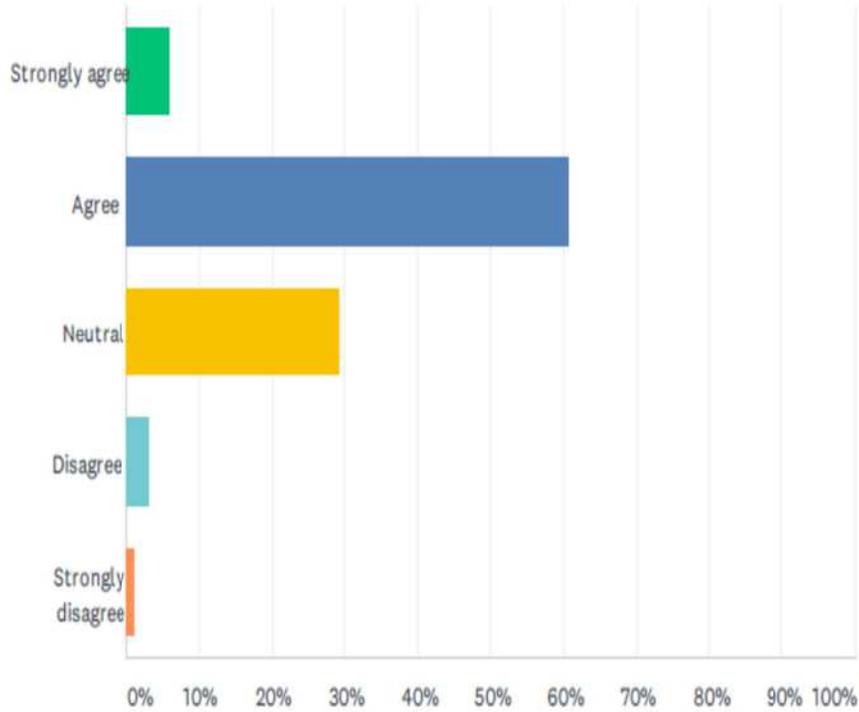
Answered: 77 Skipped: 117

1. Steps need to be repaired or replaced other than that nice.
2. I think it could be a really nice family area if it were developed a little.
3. Not much parking.
4. Needs some restoring/updating.
5. I enjoy going there to swim with my family.
6. Bird Lake Park provides residents a location for free swimming and fun in the county. We and family members have been swimming there many times and created many fond memories.
7. Weekend people take up parking for swimming.
8. Increase parking spaces and paint them.
9. Fix the sea wall.
10. I have been swimming at Bird Lake since I was a child. Need to bring in more sand for the water(has become extremely deep), bring back the buoys, and picnic tables. More parking without old ladies complaining.
11. Would like to see the park more kid friendly

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q16 Do you feel the Courthouse Grounds Park is in good shape?

Answered: 191 Skipped: 3

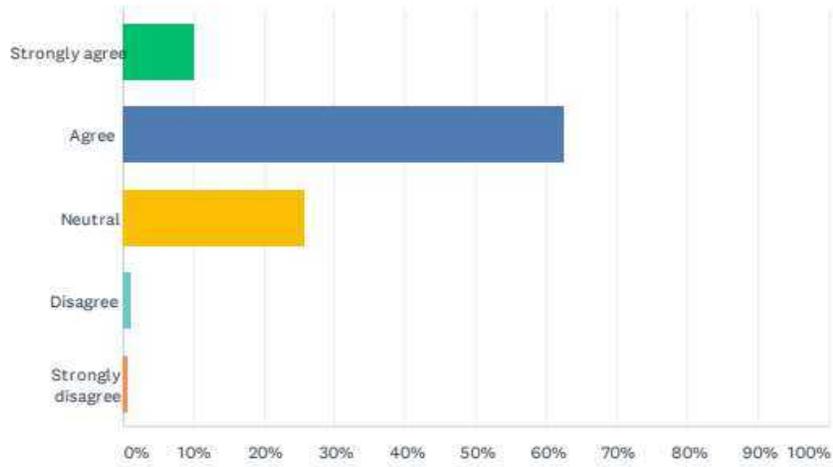


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 5.76% | 11 |
| Agree | 60.73% | 116 |
| Neutral | 29.32% | 56 |
| Disagree | 3.14% | 6 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.05% | 2 |
| TOTAL | | 191 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q17 Do you feel the Courthouse Grounds Park memorials to our troops are in good shape?

Answered: 190 Skipped: 4

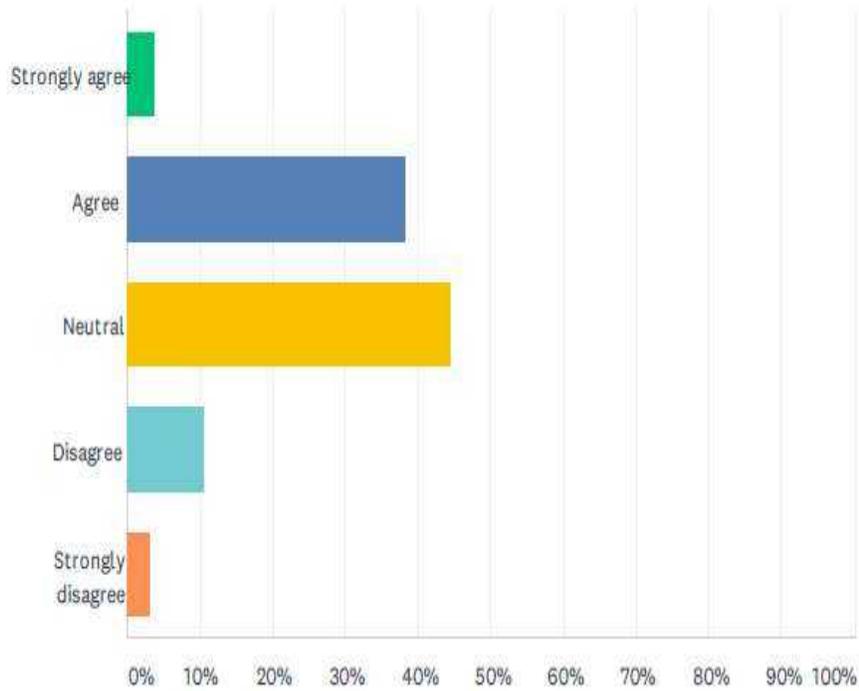


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 10.00% | 19 |
| Agree | 62.63% | 119 |
| Neutral | 25.79% | 49 |
| Disagree | 1.05% | 2 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.53% | 1 |
| TOTAL | | 190 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q18 Do you feel the Courthouse Grounds Park fountain is in good shape?

Answered: 191 Skipped: 3



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 3.66% | 7 |
| Agree | 38.22% | 73 |
| Neutral | 44.50% | 85 |
| Disagree | 10.47% | 20 |
| Strongly disagree | 3.14% | 6 |
| TOTAL | | 191 |

Q19 Please give any additional feedback on the Courthouse Lawn Park.

Answered: 87 Skipped: 107

1. The modern art stuff looks awful. Landscaping could improve.
2. Clean up the fountain, as a kid I always like the fountain.
3. Miss seeing the fountain on.
4. Drinking fountain.
5. A very nice surrounding of the Courthouse.
6. The fountain should be running.
7. I don't see it as a place for the public to gather, but for the courthouse staff to relax for lunch.
8. I didn't realize it was considered a park. It might be nice to have more things for viewing/entertaining, particularly on the fountain section.
9. Should be used for more special events-food events, non-profit events.
10. Needs better care more flowers.
11. Don't pay a ton of money to move the fountain again.
12. Needs more flowers some type of statue patriotic
13. Needs to show more history of Hillsdale.
14. Flower beds need maintained.
15. It's bland. More flowers would be nice.
16. Needs local art.
17. Fountain needs fix and operational EVERY summer.
18. Is the fountain in working order?
19. This is a great asset in our downtown and the County is quite generous in allowing use of this space.
20. More seating/gathering places.
21. I would like it to be maintained.
22. We have not visited the courthouse many times in our lives, so we don't have firsthand knowledge. But we would like to see it maintained in a proper and respectful way.
23. I guess I need to check it out. I didn't know it was considered a park around the courthouse. It seems a friendly place and looks nice driving by.
24. More benches.
25. Could be cleaner.
26. Fountain needs to be working. Couple more benches or picnic tables, bike racks would be nice.
27. More benches?
28. More benches could have a few picnic tables.
29. The fountain is disappointing.
30. We have a wonderful old courthouse, that fountain is ugly. Does not add to our downtown in any way.
31. Turn the fountain back on...it's sad to not see it running thru the summer.
32. Wasn't fountain redone in the past few years?
33. Add a few more benches.
34. Restore the fountain, update benches, bike racks, landscaping.
35. I really love this park because of the fountain. I would like to see more in the park about

Hillsdale history. We could use this especially when people are here for court or other things that bring them to Hillsdale.

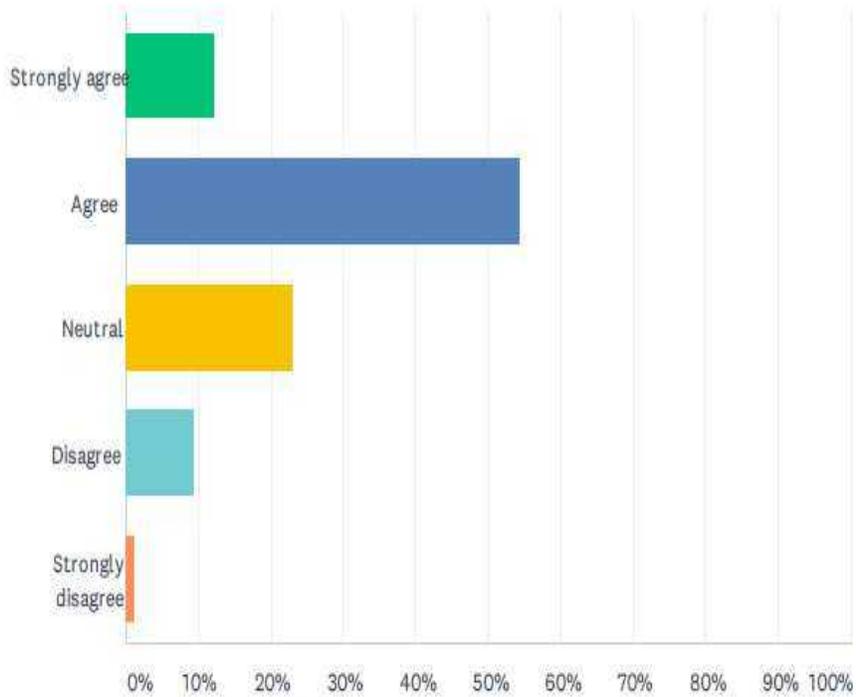
36. Better benches.

37. The fountain is a world class piece of sculpture and needs to be highlighted.

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q20 Do you feel the Lewis Emery Park picnic facilities are accommodating?

Answered: 191 Skipped: 3

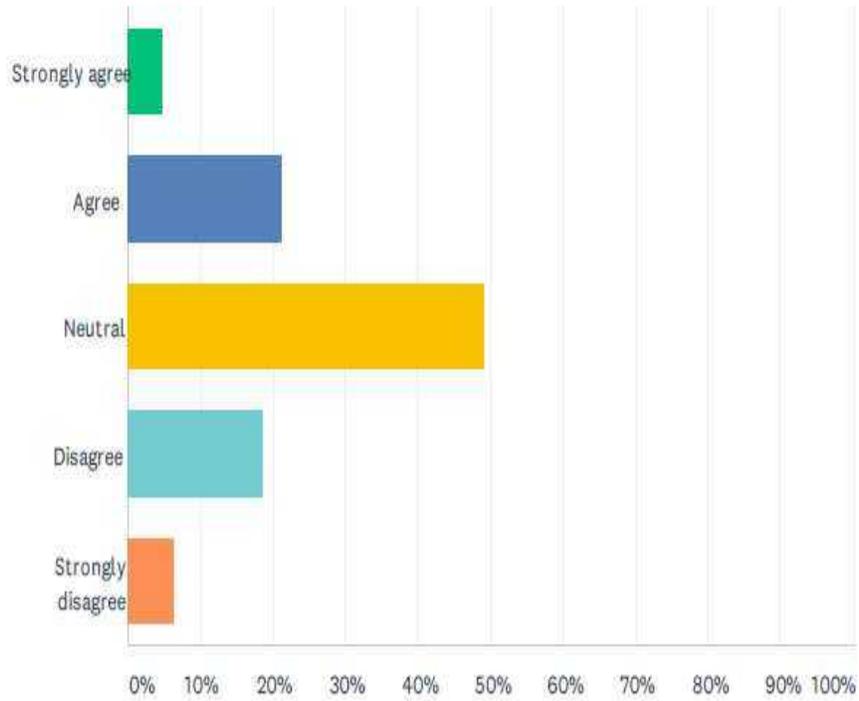


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 12.04% | 23 |
| Agree | 54.45% | 104 |
| Neutral | 23.04% | 44 |
| Disagree | 9.42% | 18 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.05% | 2 |
| TOTAL | | 191 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q21 Do you feel the Lewis Emery Park bathrooms are adequate?

Answered: 189 Skipped: 5

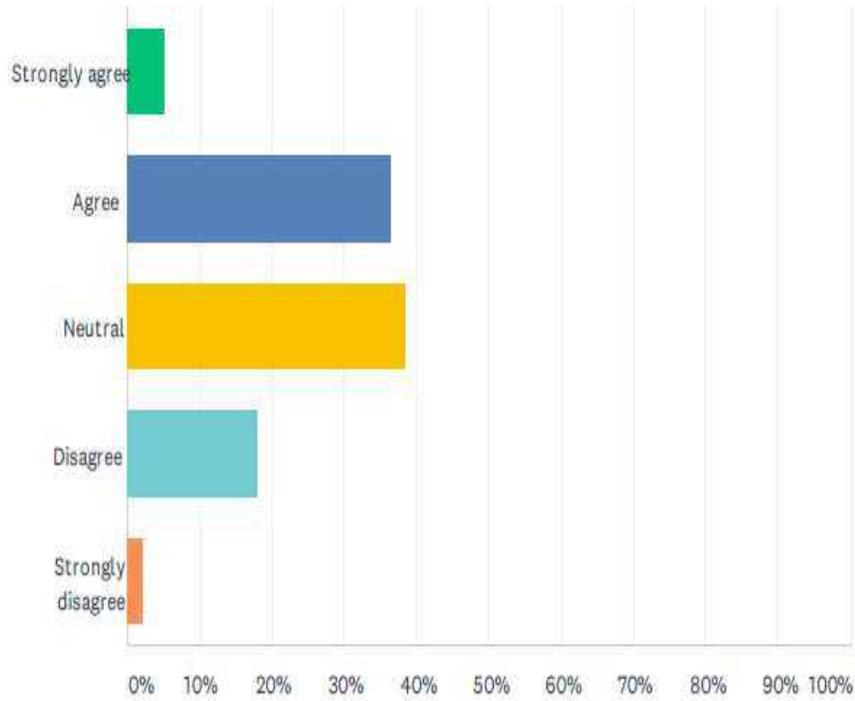


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 4.76% | 9 |
| Agree | 21.16% | 40 |
| Neutral | 49.21% | 93 |
| Disagree | 18.52% | 35 |
| Strongly disagree | 6.35% | 12 |
| TOTAL | | 189 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q22 Do you feel the Lewis Emery Park playground is adequate?

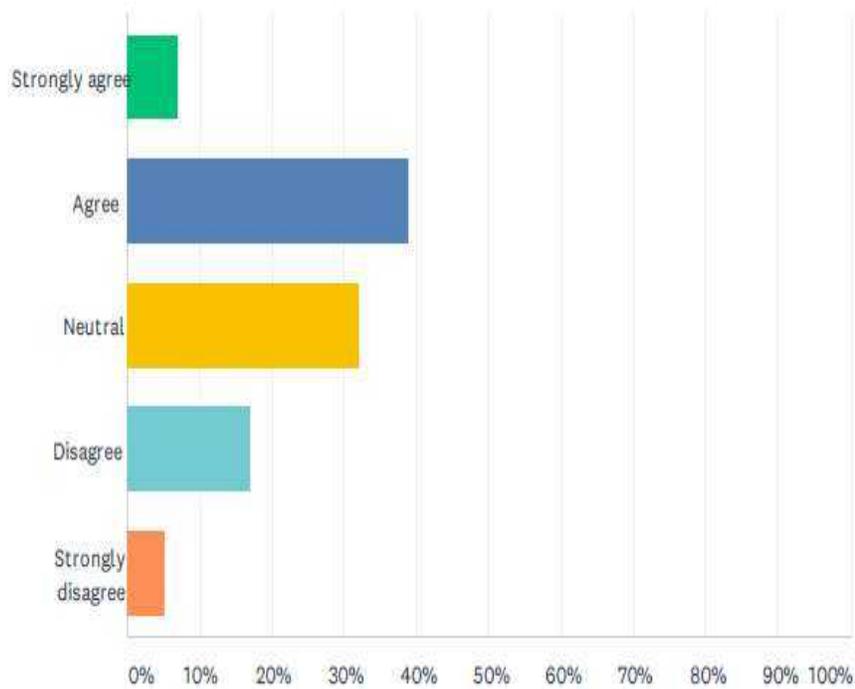
Answered: 190 Skipped: 4



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 5.26% 10 |
| Agree | 36.32% 69 |
| Neutral | 38.42% 73 |
| Disagree | 17.89% 34 |
| Strongly disagree | 2.11% 4 |
| TOTAL | 190 |

Q23 Do you feel the Lewis Emery Park fishing facilities are adequate (docks, access)?

Answered: 190 Skipped: 4

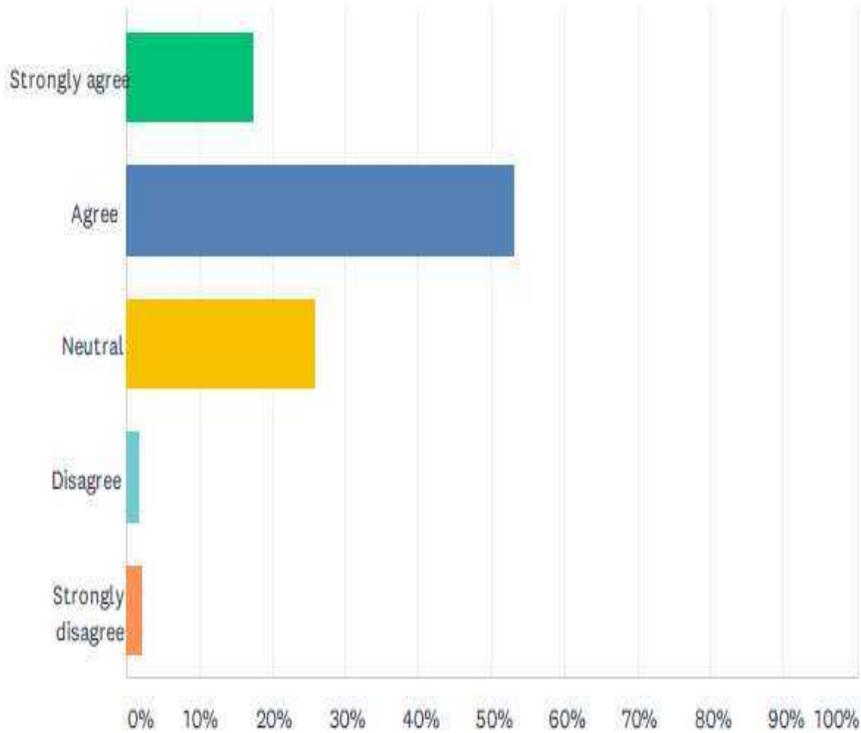


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 6.84% | 13 |
| Agree | 38.95% | 74 |
| Neutral | 32.11% | 61 |
| Disagree | 16.84% | 32 |
| Strongly disagree | 5.26% | 10 |
| TOTAL | | 190 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q24 Do you feel the Lewis Emery Park Community Center is adequate?

Answered: 190 Skipped: 4



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 17.37% | 33 |
| Agree | 53.16% | 101 |
| Neutral | 25.79% | 49 |
| Disagree | 1.58% | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | 2.11% | 4 |
| TOTAL | | 190 |

Q25 Please give any additional feedback on Lewis Emery Park.

Answered: 88 Skipped: 106

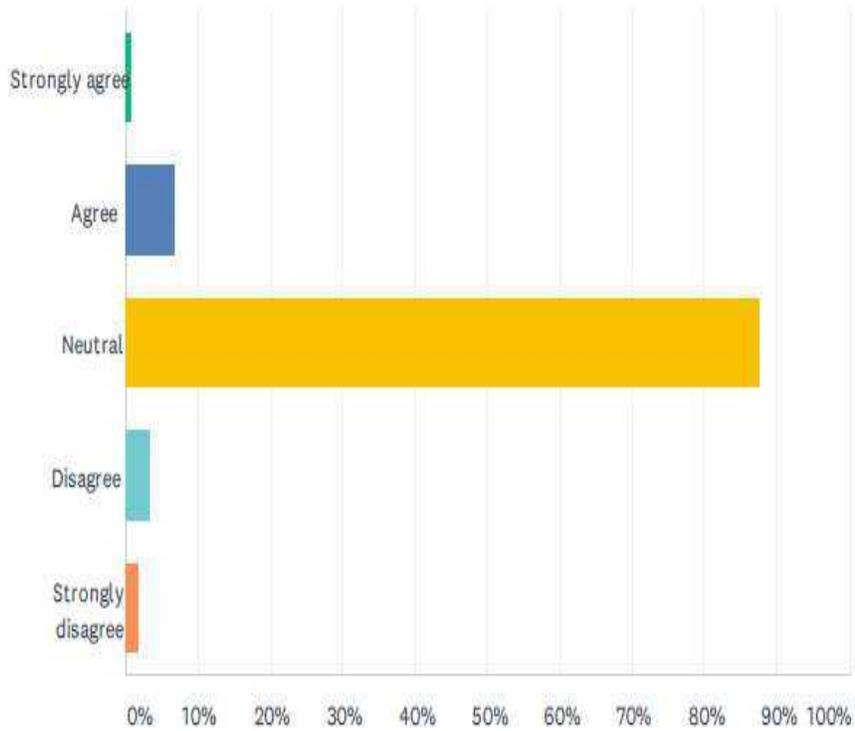
1. Docks for fishing are in serious unsafe conditions.
2. The cheap docks detract from the overall appearance of the park. Litter is another detractor from the parks. The staff has done quite well maintaining the trails.
3. The fishing docks are an eyesore.
4. Need to upgrade playground equipment and fix and repair docks.
5. With the overwhelming amount of geese always in that area, it makes it very hard to drive in and out at times. Also, with all the goose droppings it gives it an unclean appearance.
6. Please make your parks wheelchair accessible. People in wheelchairs like to enjoy the parks, playgrounds, and fish.
7. It's a beautiful place to walk and enjoy nature. Needs more benches.
8. It needs more maintenance and improvements to hiking trails.
9. Concessions open more.
10. All facilities are excellent according to my judgment.
11. Don't understand why platforms were blocked off.
12. The Community Center is an asset that is great to have, and should be kept up to date.
13. Would like to see better dock upkeep. Some of them have been in bad shape especially after winter.
14. I think non-profits should be able to use the community center with no costs, deposit only.
15. There should be a reduced rate for non-profits to use the building(like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts)
16. Flowers.
17. Pickle ball courts would be great here.
18. Doing a good job out there.
19. Half the docks are broken and falling apart, broken, sinking, or just not safe.
20. Could use a few more docks and an upgrade to the playground in the back and its pavilion redone. Handicap port a pot.
21. The lakes need to be dredged, docks refurbished.
22. Those docks look ridiculous painted. There aren't enough picnic tables or benches. Chopping down the trees made it ugly.
23. Docks are in need of repair, ponds need to be dredged and a good stocking program started.
24. Like the sledding hill.
25. Is the perfect place for gatherings and events.
26. Docks are in bad shape, many were taken out. A lot of fishing is not possible due to weeds not taken care of on banks or in the water.
27. It needs a lot of work. More bathrooms, needs a paved/concrete basketball court, and water.
28. It's in the worst shape for what used to be such a beautiful park. It's horrible that almost all the docks are falling apart and unsafe.
29. Docks need fixed, lilly pads need maintained, low water levels need addressed. Docks need mixed up or more added to different spots. Been fishing the same spots for 4 decades.
30. I wish there were a way to make the Community Center into an educational outpost of sorts.
31. More kids stuff, better kids stuff.
32. We love Lewis Emery Park. We'd like to see Civil War re-enactments there or other historical

- events.
33. Open the Community Center.
 34. This park has become a busy place for people walking dogs and themselves. The whole park needs a lot of attention to trees and brush. The upper path needs wood chips, picnic tables, need painting and docks repaired.
 35. The walking trails are starting to become a bit run down in terms of maintenance, adding wood chips, brush cleared, etc.
 36. This is an enjoyable park that I hope will be kept open for community use.
 37. We enjoy walking and driving around the park. It is a true county treasure. We eat picnics and enjoy the nature walks around the park and ponds. We take our family. It is so relaxing there. When the building is open, we have attended many events there. Please do everything you can to maintain it.
 38. The community building could use some updating. I don't always feel safe in the park and I never let my kids go there alone.
 39. More accessible restrooms. More benches.
 40. Needs some better defined hiking trails.
 41. All bathrooms need to be updated and additional one built.
 42. Docks are deteriorating.
 43. It could use some updates.
 44. I enjoy the nature.
 45. This is a very old park. Some of the improvements are nice but could use more help of a face-lift.
 46. Community building is an asset.
 47. The docks need redone again besides just painting...need actual bathrooms not port a potty.
 48. I don't think I've ever seen a restroom there. If they have them I don't know where they are.
 49. The placement of picnic tables is usually in the way for disc golf. If the disc golf is promoted and expanded, it can bring a lot to a community. There are tournaments and many more opportunities available in this fast growing sport.
 50. Replace fishing docks, benches with poly wood, put cap stones on the stone pillars supporting the entrance sign to protect the mortar joints.
 51. Nice facility, have used many times.
 52. I visit this park on a daily basis. I have noticed a few things. First I notice that the weeds are terrible. I notice how the docks are falling apart and I notice there are a ton of waterfowl always looking for food. I suggest that the weeds get cleaned up, the docks get in good repair, and maybe some quarter fed bird vending machines or something of that nature. I also noticed there is a ton of wildlife which is awesome to see. So somehow maybe incorporating the wildlife into the whole scheme.
 53. They don't have docks for people to use.
 54. Handicap access for fishing.

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q26 Do you feel the Hemlock Lake Park playground is adequate?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 16

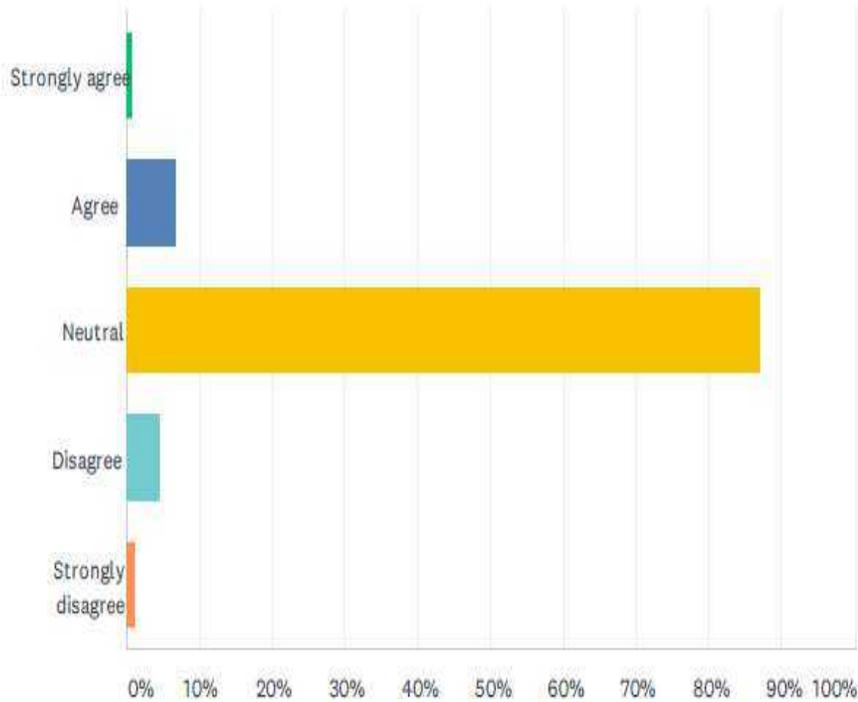


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 0.56% | 1 |
| Agree | 6.74% | 12 |
| Neutral | 87.64% | 156 |
| Disagree | 3.37% | 6 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.69% | 3 |
| TOTAL | | 178 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q27 Do you feel the Hemlock Lake Park pavilion is adequate?

Answered: 177 Skipped: 17

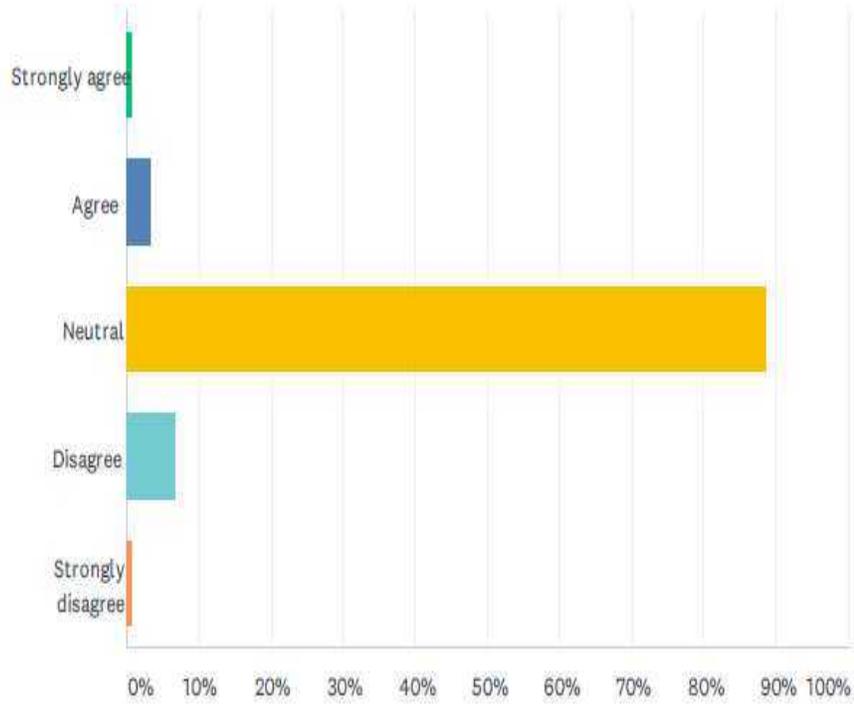


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 0.56% | 1 |
| Agree | 6.78% | 12 |
| Neutral | 87.01% | 154 |
| Disagree | 4.52% | 8 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.13% | 2 |
| TOTAL | | 177 |

Hillsdale County 2021 Parks Survey

Q28 Do you feel the Hemlock Lake Park grill is adequate?

Answered: 177 Skipped: 17



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 0.56% | 1 |
| Agree | 3.39% | 6 |
| Neutral | 88.70% | 157 |
| Disagree | 6.78% | 12 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.56% | 1 |
| TOTAL | | 177 |

Q29 Please give any additional feedback on Hemlock Lake Park.

Answered: 70 Skipped: 124

1. I would like to buy the land the park is on.
2. Please make all Hillsdale county parks wheelchair accessible. Playground equipment included
3. Better maintenance.
4. It would be nice to see things spruced up a bit.
5. Create a sidewalk to the pavilion.

Appendix C – Sources of Funding

SOURCES OF RECREATION GRANT FUNDING IN MICHIGAN

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

Match requirement – minimum of 25%

Development grants

Minimum Grant Request \$15,000

Maximum Grant Request \$300,000

Acquisition grants

No minimum or maximum

Goals of MNRTF Board

Resource Protection

Water Access

Community Recreation

Urban Recreation

Economic Development

Due annually on April 1. Awards announced in December

www.michigan.gov/dnr

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Administered by MNRTF

50% match required

Minimum grant request \$30,000 (\$60,000 project total)

Maximum grant request \$500,000 (\$1,000,000 project total)

Funds a wide variety of outdoor recreation development projects

Applications due annually on April 1. Awards usually announced in December

Must meet SCORP criteria (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan)

www.michigan.gov/dnr

A pass-thru grant from the National Park Service involves a little more grant administration.

Michigan Recreation Passport Grant

Administered by MNRTF

Minimum 25% match

Focus is on improving and renovating existing parks

Minimum grant request - \$7,500

Maximum \$150,000

Applications due on April 1. Application is simpler than the above two grants.

For outdoor and indoor recreation projects

Renovation of existing facilities is emphasized

www.michigan.gov/dnr

Community Foundations

Private Foundations and Endowments (Examples)

Wickes Foundation

Strosacker Foundatio

Gerstacker Foundation

For more complete lists of foundations, search online databases that can be found at www.nccs.urban.org or www.foundationcenter.org

Midwest Glacial Lakes Program

Invested in protecting lakes

<https://midwestglaciallakes.org>

Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership

Resources for how to provide erosion control through natural shorelines.

<https://www.mishorelinepartnership.org>

Appendix D – Notification and Adoption Information



**APPENDIX L:
POST COMPLETION SELF-INSPECTION REPORT**

Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Grants Management

PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT

POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

This information required under authority of Part 19, PA 451 of 1994, as amended;
the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964); and Part 715, of PA 451 of 1994, as amended.

GRANT TYPE:
(Please select one) MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUN RECREATION PASSPORT BOND FUND

GRANTEE: Hillsdale County

PROJECT NUMBER: BF-062 **PROJECT TYPE:** COMBINATION

PROJECT TITLE: Lewis Emery Park

PROJECT SCOPE: community building, playground

| TO BE COMPLETED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY (GRANTEE) | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Name of Agency (Grantee) | Contact Person | Title |
| <u>Hillsdale County</u> | <u>Derek Ringman</u> | <u>CFO</u> |
| Address | Telephone | |
| <u>33 McCollum ST</u> | <u>517-437-2739</u> | |
| City, State, ZIP | Email | |
| <u>Hillsdale MI 49242</u> | <u>d.ringman@co.hillsdale.mi.us</u> | |
| SITE DEVELOPMENT | | |
| Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided? If yes, please describe change(s). | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| | | |
| Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| | | |
| Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| | | |
| SITE QUALITY | | |
| Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area? If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| | | |
| Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| | | |

Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. Yes No
Cameras have been installed

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No
The building is cleaned regularly and repairs are made as needed

GENERAL

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No
S-F 150 Wedding Pack 500
SAT 400 FUNERAL ON SAT 150

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?
Year around 8am-1am

COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.

DEREK RIVYMAN
Please print

Derek Rivyman
Grantee Authorized Signature

3/10/2021
Date

Bruce Caswell
Please print

Bruce Caswell
Witness Signature

3/10/2021
Date

Send completed report to:

**POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS
GRANTS MANAGEMENT
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PO BOX 30425
LANSING MI 48909-7925**

*Work at this Site
Funded by*

**Protecting
Michigan's
Future**



Your Bond Dollars at Work

DNR 

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



**APPENDIX L:
POST COMPLETION SELF-INSPECTION REPORT**

Michigan Department of Natural Resources - Grants Management
PUBLIC OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT

POST-COMPLETION SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT

This information required under authority of Part 19, PA 451 of 1994, as amended;
the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 78 Stat. 897 (1964); and Part 715, of PA 451 of 1994, as amended.

GRANT TYPE: (Please select one) MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND CLEAN MICHIGAN INITIATIVE
 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUN RECREATION PASSPORT BOND FUND

GRANTEE: Hillsdale County

PROJECT NUMBER: LWCF-26-01060M3 **PROJECT TYPE:** COMBINATION

PROJECT TITLE: Lewis Emery Park

PROJECT SCOPE: Picnic tables, grill, softball field, playground, trail, picnic tables, basketball court

| To Be Completed By Local Government Agency (GRANTEE) | | |
|--|--|---|
| Name of Agency (Grantee) <u>Hillsdale</u> | Contact Person <u>Derek Ringman</u> | Title <u>CFO</u> |
| Address <u>33 McCollum</u> | Telephone <u>517-437-2739</u> | |
| City, State, ZIP <u>Hillsdale MI 49242</u> | Email <u>d.ringman@co.hillsdale.mi.us</u> | |
| SITE DEVELOPMENT | | |
| Any change(s) in the facility type, site layout, or recreation activities provided? If yes, please describe change(s). | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Has any portion of the project site been converted to a use other than outdoor recreation? If yes, please describe what portion and describe use. (This would include cell towers and any non-recreation buildings.) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are any of the facilities obsolete? If yes, please explain. <u>Playground equip is old</u> | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| SITE QUALITY | | |
| Is there a park entry sign which identifies the property or facility as a public recreation area? If yes, please provide a photograph of the sign. If no, please explain. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are the facilities and the site being properly maintained? If no, please explain. | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Is vandalism a problem at this site? If yes, explain the measures being taken to prevent or minimize vandalism. Yes No

Is maintenance scheduled on a regular basis? If yes, give schedule. If no, please explain. Yes No
IT is mowed. Things are fixed as needed

GENERAL

Is a Program Recognition plaque permanently displayed at the site? If yes, please provide a photograph. (Not required for Bond Fund Grants) Yes No N/A

Is any segment of the general public restricted from using the site or facilities? (i.e. resident only, league only, boaters only, etc.) If yes, please explain. Yes No

Is a fee charged for use of the site or facilities? If yes, please provide fee structure. Yes No
Pavilion 30

What are the hours and seasons for availability of the site?
Year around 8am-10pm

COMMENTS (ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that I am duly elected, appointed and/or authorized by the Grantee named above and that the information and answers provided herein are true and accurate to the best of my personal knowledge, information and belief.

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Derek Ringman</i> Please print | <i>Derek Ringman</i> Grantee Authorized Signature | <i>3/10/2021</i> Date |
| <i>Bruce Caswell</i> Please print | <i>Bruce Caswell</i> Witness Signature | <i>3/10/2021</i> Date |

Send completed report to: **POST COMPLETION GRANT INSPECTION REPORTS
GRANTS MANAGEMENT
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PO BOX 30425
LANSING MI 48909-7925**



sville council tackles light agenda

through November 2024. The council also voted to establish a meeting calendar for the Board of Review, which will meet in March, July and December.

City Manager Jeff Gray anticipates the March organization meeting and March appeal meeting will be held via zoom. If later meetings are held in person, they will be held at the Jonesville Fire

Department whose social distancing can be accommodated. The council also took action to affirm an income and asset guideline which will be used in the consideration of property tax exemption requests during 2025.

Guidelines were first established in 2018 when the council passed a resolution establishing them for the Board of Review to

evaluate requests for exemption from the payment of property taxes based on household income. The guidelines establish that income and asset guidelines will follow federal standards.

Finally, Gray announced that through two donations from Consumer's Energy and a third from a private donor, the DDA was able to fund a gift card and gift certificate program that

totalled \$22,000 in participating businesses in the downtown area in mid-December 2020.

At least one card or certificate was purchased from each participating business and buyers generally spread their purchases to multiple businesses," Gray said.

The Jonesville City Council will meet again at 6 p.m. on Feb. 17.



The Community Center at Lewis Emery Park hasn't been a source of income for the park since COVID-19 has limited functions there. (NANCY HASTINGS PHOTOS)

Survey to provide info for parks plan

By Nancy Hastings
cmhastings@dnr

HILLSDALE — The Hillsdale County Parks trustees are having a former state representative write a five-year recreation plan for them to save area parks.

But before the plan can be written, a survey is required, asking people what the like and don't like and what they would like to see in some area parks.

Patrice Caswell said he was chosen to write the plan because he volunteered.

"I said I would do it for nothing," Caswell said. "The survey will give us information to help us plan."

The survey will be up for 30 days and is being done through survey monkey. The link for the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/APPTXSNX>.

"Once the plan is done and accepted by the State DNR, then the parks trustees will be able to apply for grants to help them fix up and improve our county parks," Caswell said. "Those parks are Lewis Emery, Ford Lake, Hemlock Beach, Kather-Gall and the Courthouse Lawn."

Caswell explained that as part of putting together a five-year plan for the parks, it is required that public input is gathered on the parks.

See PARKS, A2



The docks at Lewis Emery Park are among items in need of attention at the park.

US jobless claims decline to a still-high 900,000

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PARKS
From Page A1

Caswell said he volunteered because the county commissioners were thinking about paying Region 2 about \$12,000 to get it done.

"I said that was ridiculous," Caswell said. "I never served on the parks committee. I do not have any particular hopes for the plan. I am simply a collector of information and will reflect that information in the plan."

Caswell added that he has no idea the feedback that will come in.

"I think 200-300 would be a good response," he said. "Once the plan is done, then the parks commission can apply for grants. If they get the grants, that might have an impact on the area economically."

Those serving on the parks commission include Bob Godfrey, Mike Parney and Gary Leitinger.

Providing some background, Mike Parney said the plan is needed, particularly to keep Lewis Emery Park open.

"If we don't get more money from the county, then it will end up closing," he said. "With Covid

going on and the community center not open, there has been no income."

Parney said parks need funding and after the county cut their funding years ago, Lewis Emery has been surviving off the community center.

"It's not able to make it and it will close without some form of income," Parney said.

Godfrey said the five year plan is needed to apply for the grant and now that the county cut their funding years ago, Lewis Emery has been surviving off the community center.

"It's not able to make it and it will close without some form of income," Parney said.

Godfrey said the five year plan is needed to apply for the grant and now that the county cut their funding years ago, Lewis Emery has been surviving off the community center.

"The county just doesn't have enough money to go around," Godfrey said. "There needs to be work done on the ponds, the docks and so on, so we have to get the grant."

Godfrey said Caswell is knowledgeable in the process and has taken classes on how to do it.

"Down the road, we'll ask him to write some grants for us," Godfrey said. "I think this will really help us."

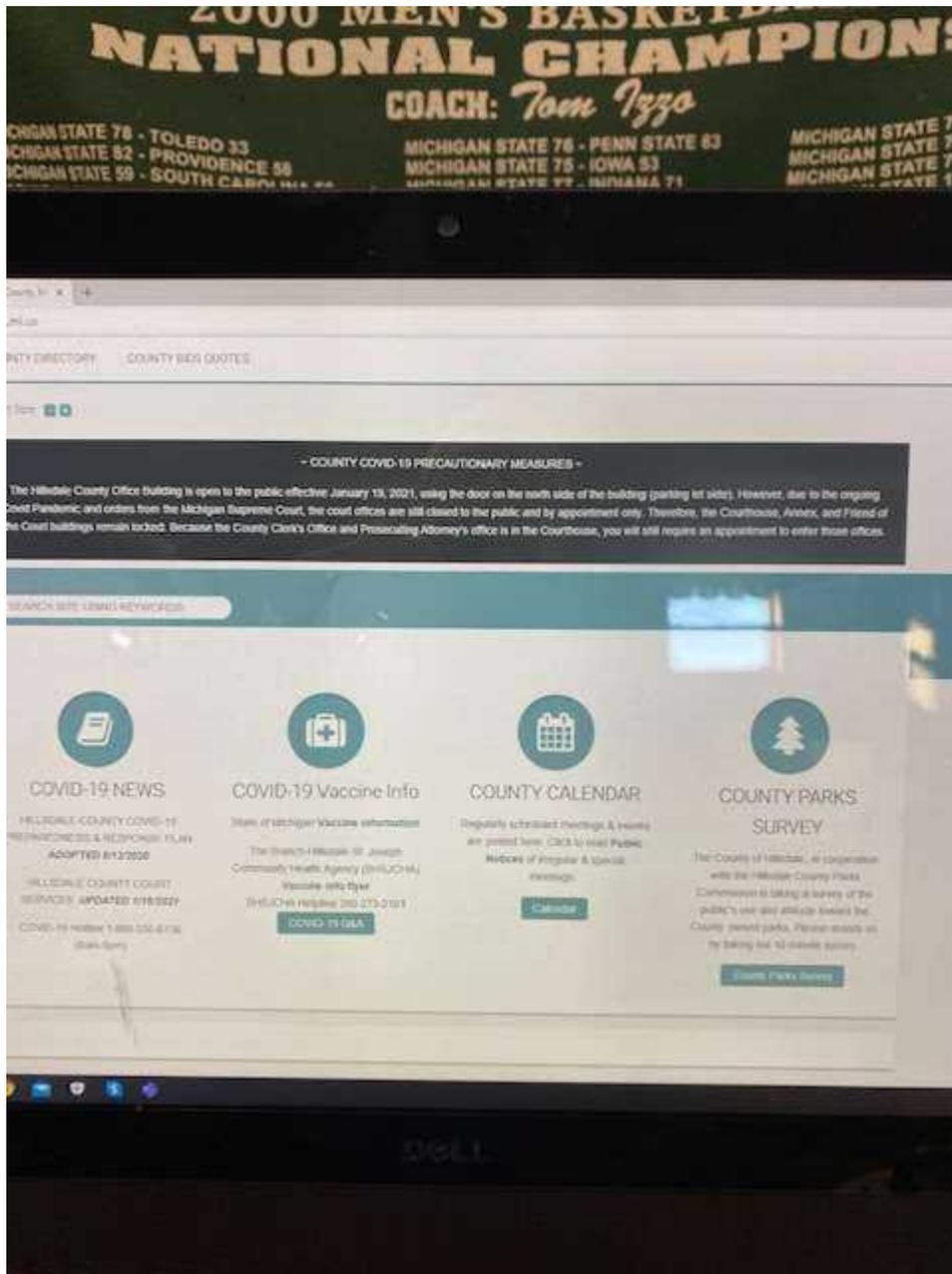
For more information, call Caswell at: 517-523-3067 or email: bcaswell@frontier.com. The survey site will be up until Feb. 19 and Caswell said the link will also be on the county website: www.co.hillsdale.mi.us.

Before putting together a five-year plan for the parks, it is required that public input is gathered on the parks. (FILE PHOTO)

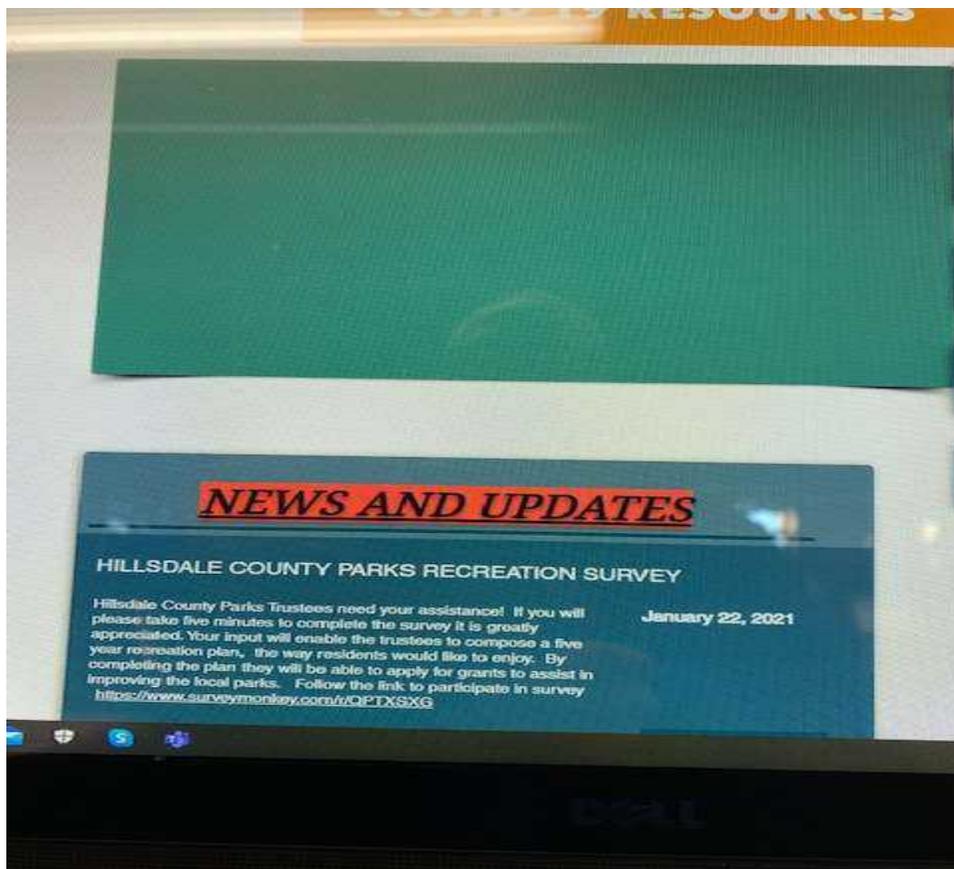
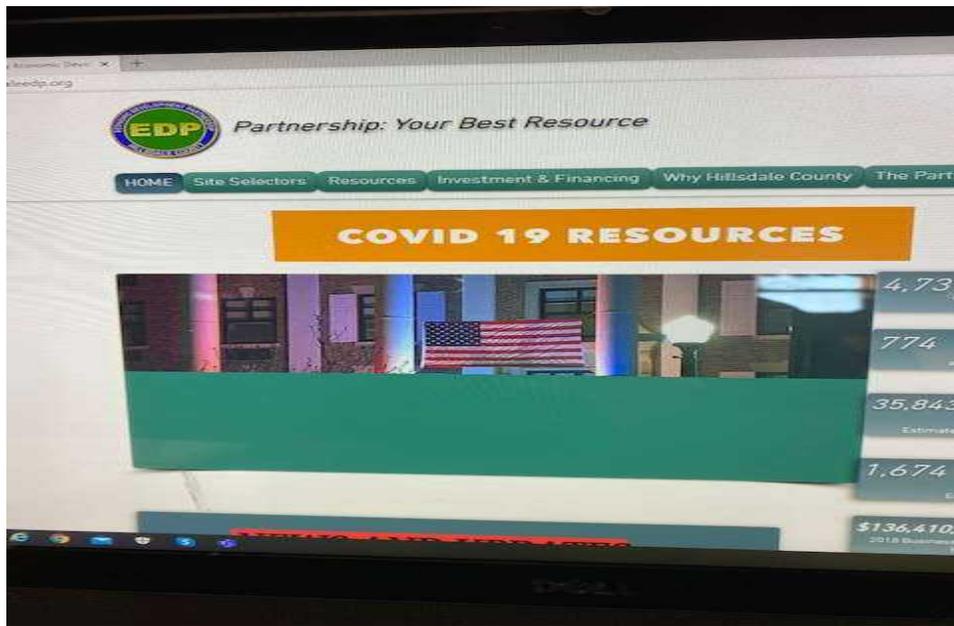
This scene at Traverset County during a blizzard. Clouds and a citizen back to work.



Facebook



Hillsdale County Website.



Economic Development Website

Ads were also run on the local radio station, WCSR, for 1 week.