



## **5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2026-2030**

A Master Plan by the Johnson County Parks and Recreation  
Board and the Johnson County Parks and Recreation  
Department

Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department  
3060 E. North St.  
Nineveh, IN 46164  
812-526-6809  
[jocoparks.com](http://jocoparks.com)

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## **Table of Contents**

- 3. Executive Summary
  - 4. Introduction & Background
  - 6. Vision, Mission, and Core Values
  - 7. Planning Process
  - 8. Existing Park Facilities/Amenities
  - 10. Park Partners
  - 11. Needs Analysis
  - 12. Capital Improvement Plan
  - 15. Community Engagement
  - 16. Stakeholder Meetings and Public Survey Results
  - 17. Maintenance Plan
  - 18. Staffing
  - 19. Park Events and Programs
  - 20. Parks Software
  - 21. Parks Department Budget
  - 22. Parks Maps
- 
-

## **Executive Summary**

Johnson County Parks & Recreation provides residents with safe, accessible, and sustainable recreational spaces. This plan outlines priorities for the next five years, including capital improvements, accessibility upgrades, and sustainability initiatives. This plan has been guided by discussion from Parks Staff, Park Board Members, and community engagement to ensure alignment with residents' needs and expectations.

The underlying focus of the of the Johnson County Parks and Recreation 5-year Master Plan is to provide amenities to the community, draw outside visitors to Johnson County, and to promote the Parks Department.

This plan has been constructed with the evaluation of past planning efforts, while looking at current amenities, future amenities, and future growth for the department. The Department and Board will utilize this plan as a guide for the next 5 years and into the future.

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## **Introduction & Background**

The Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department began in 1977 when an estimated 561 acres of land (once a part of Camp Atterbury) were deeded to the county by a grant from The U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. This became Johnson County Park. An additional 80 acres were added in the 1980's, bringing the total acreage of the park to 622. Independence Park was formed in 2000 and was developed with the first all-inclusive, handicap-accessible playground in the state of Indiana. The Parks Department now operates those two parks (totaling 635 acres), Johnson County Park and Independence Park.

Most of the development in the past for the department has centered around Hoosier Horse Park and the park's campground. This is due to the ever-increasing popularity within the equine industry and camping industry. With changes in elected officials and the park board, along with public desire to improve parks and facilities, the department has made strides to improve the facilities.

Over the last decade, Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department has made significant strides to repair, replace, and maintain facilities at the two parks. The Department recognizes we still have work to do to provide the best amenities for the public. With this master plan that is our focus over the next 5 years and into the future.

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The Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department Board is governed by a 5-person Park Board. The board members serve on staggered terms. The Park Board was reconstructed from a 7-person board to a 5-person board beginning in January 2026, pursuant to IC 36-10-3.

The current Park Board members are:

|                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Dan Cartwright, President     | (January 2026-December 2029) |
| Jeri Thompson, Vice President | (January 2026-December 2029) |
| Penny Lee, Secretary          | (January 2026-December 2027) |
| Scott Jamieson                | (January 2026-December 2027) |
| Gary Cooper                   | (January 2026-December 2026) |

The office for the department is located at 3060 E. North St. Nineveh, IN 46164. The park office phone number is 812-526-6809. The Department is comprised of 11 full-time employees that are responsible for the day-to-day operations of Johnson County Park and Independence Park. In addition, the department also employs numerous part-time (seasonal) staff each year.



## Vision, Mission, and Core Values

**Mission:** Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department will develop, operate, and maintain parks that enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and preserve greenspace for future generations.

The Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department continually strives to achieve this through:

- Providing unique community-oriented recreation opportunities.
- Providing educational programming and events.
- Encouraging interaction with the outdoors, while promoting conservation and stewardship.

Goals of the Plan:

- Provide guidance for the Park Board and Staff for the next 5 years
  - Add new park amenities to draw more park visitors
  - Upgrade existing facilities
  - Enhance community engagement
  - Enhance park promotions to increase number of visitors
  - Explore future staffing needs based on anticipated growth.
  - Research various software so the department can operate as efficiently as possible
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## Planning Process

The Johnson County Parks and Recreation Board discussed a new, updated 5-year master plan at the February 2026 Board Meeting. The Park Board directed the Parks Superintendent to compose the 5-year master plan at that time.

The planning process included:

- Creating a master plan committee; comprised of the Park Board President, Park Board Vice President, Parks Superintendent, and Parks Assistant Superintendent.
- Multiple master plan committee meetings to establish the future direction of the department.
- The master plan committee established an updated capital improvements list.
- The capital improvement list provided in this plan will direct the Department on facilities and amenities to add to the parks system or to renovate.
- Meetings with stakeholders and the public to determine needs for the department.
- The committee intends to address certain maintenance aspects around the parks during this 5-year master plan. That maintenance plan is also provided within this plan.
- The committee also recognized other aspects of the management of the parks that could be addressed. Including, but not limited to, new reservation software for the department, new maintenance software for the department, and accounting software.
- The committee also will constantly consider all staffing needs for the department.

# Existing Parks Facilities/Amenities

## Johnson County Park (622 Acres)

- Park Office Building
- Maintenance Compound
- RV Campground
- RV Campground Shower House
- Playground
- Basketball Court
- Front Room
- Amphitheater
- Lake Cottonwood
- Coyote Trace Disc Golf
- McClain Cabin
- Nineveh Senior Center
- Indiana Live Steamers
- Johnson Co. RC Flyers
- Heartnut Shelter
- Fireside Shelter
- Beech Shelter
- Cedar Shelter
- Welcome Shelter
- Maples Building
- Scout Building
- Baseball Diamond
- Nut Grove
- Franklin College Prairie
- Columbus Model Railroad Club
- Johnson Co. Antique Machinery
- RC Car Track



## **Hoosier Horse Park (Located within Johnson County Park)**

- Dunn Arena
- Baker Arena
- Arena 5
- Stadium Jumping Arena
- Stadium Warm-Up Arena
- Dressage Complex
- Equestrian Cross Country Course
- 452 stalls
- RV Campground
- Baker Arena Shower House

## **Independence Park (13.5 Acres)**

- Playground
  - Pickleball Courts
  - Gazebo
  - REMC Shelter
  - Bargersville Utility Shelter
  - Case Shelter
  - Paved Trail
  - Basketball Courts
  - Story Walk
  - Maintenance Building
- 



## Park Partners

Johnson County Parks and Recreation proudly partners with numerous community organizations that operate autonomously out of Johnson County Park. These groups hold numerous events that attract many visitors to Johnson County Park each year. We are proud to continue the great partnerships we have with these various groups. We call those groups Park Partners for the department.

Those groups include:

-Johnson County Antique Machinery Club  
website: [jcamach.org](http://jcamach.org)

-Indiana Live Steamers  
website: [indianalivesteamers.org](http://indianalivesteamers.org)

-Columbus Area Model Railroad Club  
website: [columbusarearailroadclub.org](http://columbusarearailroadclub.org)

-Nineveh Senior Center  
Facebook: Nineveh Senior Center

-Johnson County Radio-Control Flyers  
Website: [jcrcf.net](http://jcrcf.net)

-Rural Smiths of Mid-America  
Facebook: Rural Smiths of Mid-America

The department values the great relationships we have with all these groups and provide as much support to them as possible. The department looks forward to continuing those partnerships for many years to come.

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## **Needs Analysis**

This information has been analyzed after reviewing facilities, park department input, park board input, stakeholder input, and public input.

The stakeholder meeting and public meeting, in conjunction with the results of the parks system inventory and analysis, were used to develop a base set of community needs and desires. Parks Department needs have been identified in the following capital improvements plan.

Johnson County Parks and Recreation will continuously look for new opportunities to add to the available parkland. This is one of the main motivations to prepare this 5-year Master Plan, so the department is ready to make important decisions about the future.

The Parks Department is constantly looking to develop and enhance existing facilities. The Department will look to make improvements to existing facilities that fall in line with the community's needs and the department's needs.

In keeping with the department's vision and mission, the capital improvement list provides a goal for the future. This plan outlines a guide to add or renovate facilities and amenities to the Parks Department.

The plan outlines the facility, planned improvement, potential costs associated, and potential funding source(s).

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## Capital Improvement Plan

The included capital improvement plan has been compiled and organized for each park. This plan is an overall goal for projects the Parks Department and Park Board have for the next 5 years. This process will be ongoing over the next 5 years to renovate facilities in the parks and add new amenities to the parks.

### Johnson County Park

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Projects</b>                  | <b>Estimated Cost</b> | <b>Funding Source(s)</b>                              |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 2026        | New Dock                         | \$40,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds                             |
| 2026        | Kayak Rental Kiosk               | \$35,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds                             |
| 2026        | Sports Complex                   | \$400,000             | General Obligation Bonds                              |
| 2026        | Campground Shelter and Fire Pit  | \$30,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds                             |
| 2026        | Park Fiber                       | \$350,000             | ARPA Funds  |
| 2026-2027   | Shelter Area Playground          | \$150,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds                             |
| 2026-2028   | *Cabins                          | \$2,500,000           | Parks Non-Reverting Funds<br>CVT Grants               |
| 2027        | Banquet Hall                     | \$2,500,000           | General Obligation Bonds<br>Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2027        | Bike Pump Track                  | \$200,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds<br>Donations<br>CVT Grants  |
| 2027-2028   | Campground Expansion / Amenities | \$75,000-\$150,000    | General Obligation Bonds<br>Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2027-2029   | *Amphitheater Upgrades           | \$1,500,000           | Parks Non-Reverting Funds<br>CVT Grants               |
| 2029        | Driving Range                    | \$50,000-\$100,000    | Parks Non-Reverting Funds                             |
| 2030        | Lake Shelter                     | \$40,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds                             |
| 2030        | Splash Pad                       | \$250,000-\$500,000   | Parks Non-Reverting Funds<br>Donations                |

# Capital Improvement Plan

## Hoosier Horse Park (located within Johnson County Park)

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Projects</b>                         | <b>Estimated Cost</b> | <b>Funding Source(s)</b>               |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| 2026        | Baker Arena Fans                        | \$45,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds              |
| 2026        | Dunn Arena Roof                         | \$150,000             | General Obligation Bonds               |
| 2026        | Dunn Arena Ceiling                      | \$100,000             | General Obligation Bonds               |
| 2026        | Dunn Arena Lights and Fans              | \$20,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds              |
| 2026-2027   | Campground Expansion (Gravel Sites)     | \$20,000-\$25,000     | Parks Non-Reverting Funds              |
| 2027        | Dump Station                            | \$100,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds              |
| 2027        | Baker Arena Speakers                    | \$30,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds              |
| 2027-2028   | Baker Arena Footing Upgrades            | \$150,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds              |
| 2027-2028   | *Barn Upgrades                          | \$650,000-\$850,000   | General Obligation Bonds               |
| 2027-2028   | Cover Arena 5                           | \$1,000,000           | General Obligation Bonds               |
| 2028        | *Dressage and Stadium Arenas Renovation | \$1,500,000           | Parks Non-Reverting Funds<br>Donations |
| 2028-2029   | Resurface Main Campground               | \$200,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds              |

# Capital Improvement Plan

## Independence Park

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Projects</b>                | <b>Estimated Cost</b> | <b>Funding Source(s)</b>  |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 2026        | Gazebo                         | \$100,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2026        | Re-Metal Shelters              | \$25,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2026        | Landscaping / Renovate Pergola | \$20,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2026        | Renovate Trail                 | \$125,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2027        | Fitness Equipment              | \$25,000-\$50,000     | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2027        | Music Equipment                | \$30,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2028-2029   | Dog Park                       | \$50,000              | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |
| 2030        | Skate Park                     | \$200,000             | Parks Non-Reverting Funds |

\*Indicates a project that will be in phases over multiple years

In the spring of 2026, the Park Board formally voted to permanently close the Gatling Gauntlet Obstacle Course. While not listed in the capital improvement plan, the department and board will brainstorm how to redevelop this portion of Johnson County Park throughout the duration of this 5-year plan.

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# Community Engagement

Public participation and stakeholder engagement are critical components of the Master Plan process. The planning effort for the Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department was designed to ensure that residents, elected officials, and user groups had meaningful opportunities to provide input and help shape the future vision for the parks system.

The engagement process focused on identifying community priorities, evaluating existing park and recreation facilities/amenities, understanding future recreational needs, and establishing investment priorities for the next five years. Input gathered throughout the process directly informed the goals, recommendations, and capital improvement priorities included in this Master Plan.

Stakeholder meetings were held at the Johnson County Parks and Recreation office on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00am, April 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00pm, and April 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

The following groups participated in stakeholder outreach efforts:

- Local elected officials
- Johnson County Parks and Recreation Board members
- Johnson County Park User Groups
- Johnson County Park campground users
- Hoosier Horse Park show organizers

A public survey was distributed to gather feedback regarding park usage, recreational interests, facility conditions, and future priorities. The survey was posted on the parks' Facebook page and website. The survey was made available in printed format as well.

## Stakeholder Meetings and Public Survey Results

A comprehensive community engagement process was conducted to gather input from residents, stakeholders, and park users regarding the future of the department. Public surveys and stakeholder meetings provided valuable insight into current strengths, areas for improvement, and emerging recreational needs. Results indicated strong community support for maintaining existing facilities while investing in new amenities.

The following amenities were mentioned very frequently throughout the community engagement process:

- More pickleball courts or tennis courts
- Splash pad
- Additional playground(s) in Johnson County Park
- Johnson County Park Amphitheater renovations
- Campground expansions
- Cabins
- Road improvements
- Hoosier Horse Park dump station
- Hoosier Horse Park footing improvements
- Fiber internet
- Increased Park security.

Overall, feedback that was received demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with existing facilities while highlighting a desire for strategic investments that enhance quality of life, support community health and wellness, and accommodate future growth. The findings from this engagement process have been incorporated in this master plan.

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## Maintenance Plan

The Parks Department will continue to perform routine maintenance on all park grounds and facilities. The Department recognizes the need to keep all facilities well maintained and operated smoothly.

The Parks Department and Park Board recognize various facilities have a need for additional maintenance to improve the facility. Below is a list of specific maintenance items the Parks Department and Park Board plan to address during this 5-year Master Plan.

- Improved drainage at the Nineveh Senior Center
- Improved drainage at the RC Flyers Building
- Add more shade trees in Johnson County Park\*
- Add more shade trees in Independence Park\*
- Add more prairie areas in Johnson County Park\*
- Continue to make road improvements in Johnson County Park\*
- Increase security in the parks\*
- Stormwater management in parks\*

The Parks Department and Park Board recognize the need for continued maintenance within both parks and will constantly evaluate and address additional needs in the future.

\*Indicates items that will continually be addressed each year of the 5-year master plan.

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## Staffing

The Parks Department is currently comprised of 11 Full-Time employees, and the department employs numerous Part-Time employees yearly as well.

### Current Full-Time Positions:

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Maintenance Supervisor
- Recreation Director
- Office Manager
- Administrative Assistant
- Park Maintenance (5)

The Parks Department and Park Board have recognized the potential need for additional staff in the future to run the parks as efficiently as possible. The Department and Board will evaluate all positions on a yearly basis and future staffing needs will be addressed.

The Department and Board will investigate implementing a marketing plan to better promote the parks. A major part of the plan will be to promote the parks more frequently on social media to bring more visitors to the parks. The Department and Board recognize the potential need to add a Marketing Director or contract out marketing services to accomplish that goal. We are currently investigating a possible rebrand for the department.

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## Park Events and Programs

Johnson County Parks and Recreation conduct numerous events for the public throughout the year. Strides have been taken over the past few years to offer more events for our Johnson County community and visiting guests.

### Public Park Events Include:

- Scrambled Eggs (Adult Easter Egg Hunt)
- Vintage Camper Rally
- Military Appreciation Day
- Pours in the Park
- Sparks in the Park
- RecFest
- Car Show
- Movies in the Park
- Touch-A-Truck
- Autumn in the Park
- Carni-Fall
- Deck The Stalls

### Campground Events (Campers Only) Include:

- Golf Cart 500
- Christmas in July
- Game Night Trivia
- Bingo and Bluegrass
- Camp-O-Ween

The department is constantly evaluating events and brainstorming ideas for new events. Over the next 5 years, Johnson County Parks and Recreation will continue to review current events and work to provide new, exciting events for our community.

Johnson County Parks and Recreation coordinates with our (6) Park Partners with their own individual events. Many of the user groups participate during park events as well. The Department partners with outside organizations to host their events in the parks and will continue to increase those partnerships in the future.

Once all the renovations are complete with the Johnson County Parks Amphitheater, the department and board envision working with a promoter and hosting multiple large-scale concerts per year. The end goal of renovating the amphitheater is to turn that facility into a first-class music venue to host large concerts. Please refer to the capital improvement list for amphitheater renovations.

## Parks Software

Johnson County Parks and Recreation have utilized the same reservation software for several years. The Department and Board recognize the need to update the reservation software to make reservations more efficient and more user-friendly to park patrons. This would provide online reservations for park patrons.

Within the next five years, the department plans to explore and implement software solutions that improve operational efficiency, including maintenance management and accounting software.

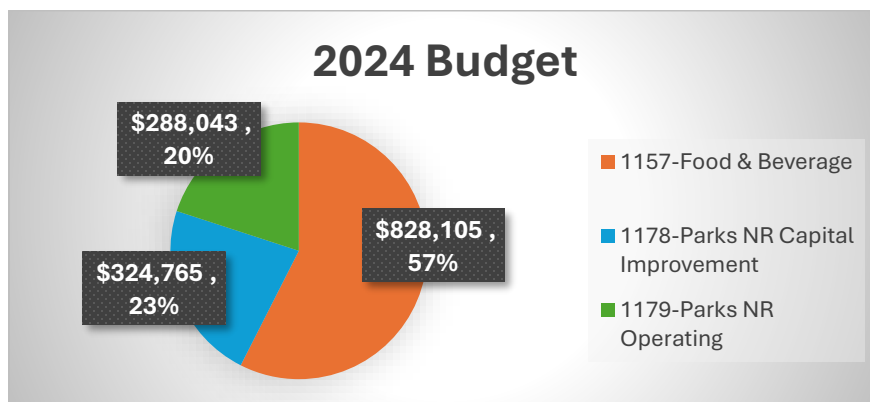
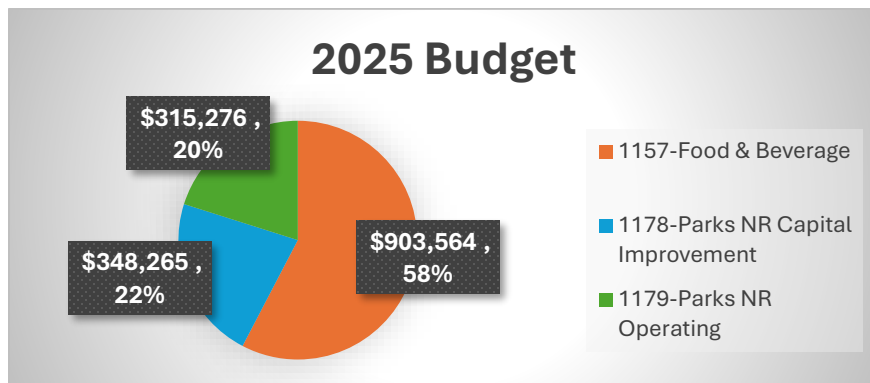
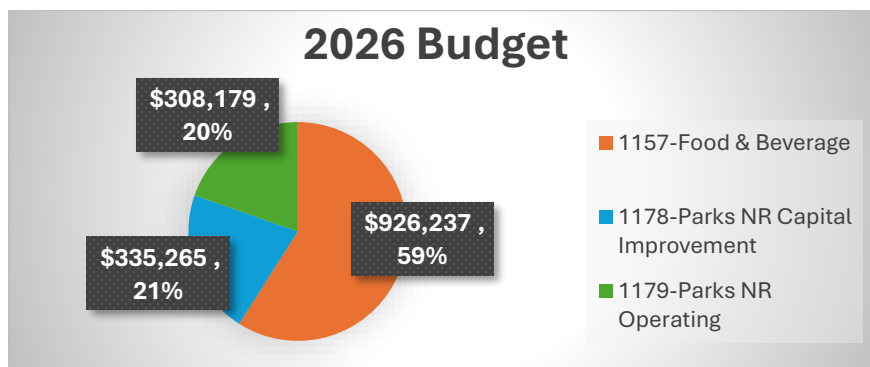
As the parks continue to grow the need for maintenance software has become a bigger need. This would allow staff to track all projects and routine maintenance more effectively.

The department will investigate the need for accounting software to track receipts and expenditures throughout the various sections of the park more efficiently.



# Parks Department Budget

The department operates on an annual budget of just over \$1.5 million. The Parks Department budget is made up of two sources: A portion of the county's Food & Beverage tax collections, and money generated by park services like rental fees, campground fees, horse park fees, etc. Occasionally bonds, grants, and other outside monetary sources supplement the budget by providing capital improvements, maintenance, and special opportunities.



# Parks Maps





# JOHNSON COUNTY PARK - SOUTH PROPERTY MAP

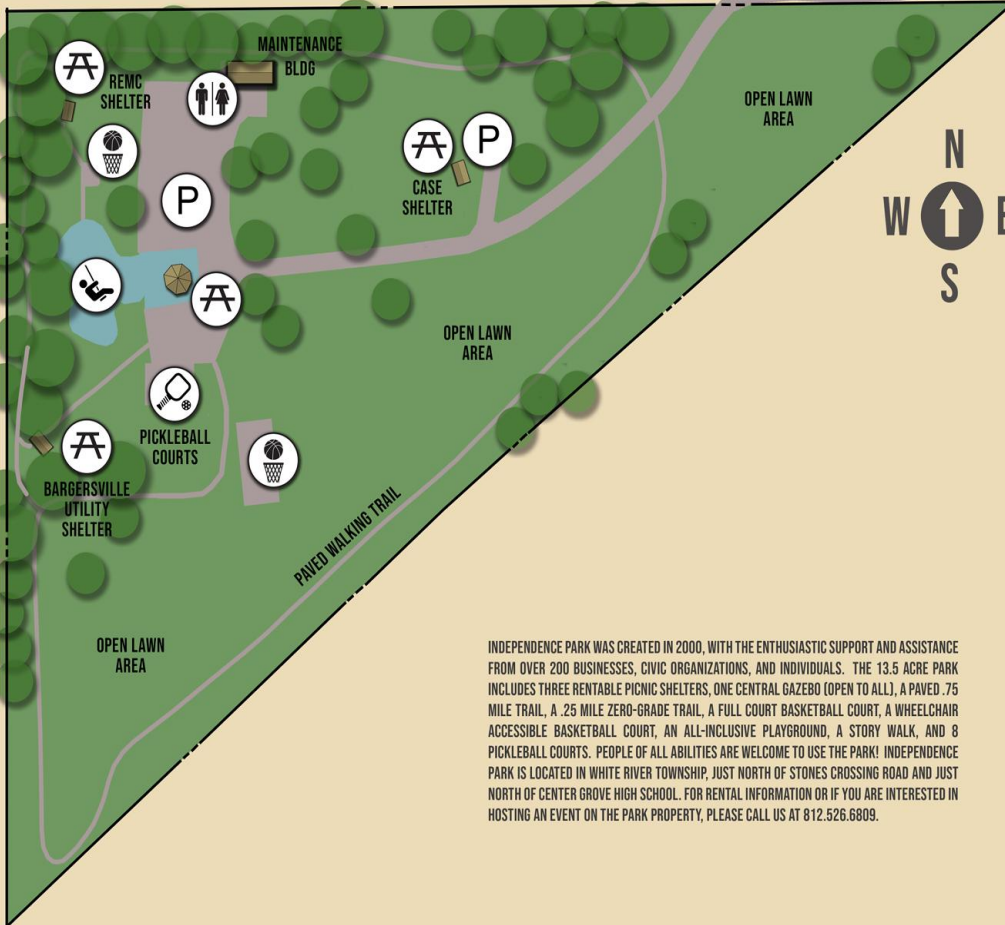




# INDEPENDENCE PARK MAP

2100 SOUTH MORGANTOWN ROAD, GREENWOOD, IN 46143  
PH 812.526.6809 WEB JOCOPARKS.COM

PARK HOURS DAWN TO DUSK/YEAR-ROUND  
RESTROOMS ARE OPEN SEASONALLY



INDEPENDENCE PARK WAS CREATED IN 2000, WITH THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FROM OVER 200 BUSINESSES, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS. THE 13.5 ACRE PARK INCLUDES THREE RENTABLE PICNIC SHELTERS, ONE CENTRAL GAZEBO (OPEN TO ALL), A PAVED .75 MILE TRAIL, A .25 MILE ZERO-GRADE TRAIL, A FULL COURT BASKETBALL COURT, A WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE BASKETBALL COURT, AN ALL-INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND, A STORY WALK, AND 8 PICKLEBALL COURTS. PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES ARE WELCOME TO USE THE PARK! INDEPENDENCE PARK IS LOCATED IN WHITE RIVER TOWNSHIP, JUST NORTH OF STONES CROSSING ROAD AND JUST NORTH OF CENTER GROVE HIGH SCHOOL. FOR RENTAL INFORMATION OR IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN HOSTING AN EVENT ON THE PARK PROPERTY, PLEASE CALL US AT 812.526.6809.

↑  
OLIVE BRANCH RD  
0.5 MI



CR 500 WEST / SOUTH MORGANTOWN ROAD

↓  
STONES CROSSING RD  
.3 MI