

# SECTION C: DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

- 1) **Plan Development Process:** The development of the Antrim County 2005 Community Recreation Plan began in the summer of 2003 and was conducted in-house by the Antrim County Parks and Recreation Commission and the staff of the Office of the Coordinator/Planner. Development of the Plan began with a review of the existing 2000 plan and a goal setting session conducted for the Parks and Recreation Commission by Stan Moore, MSU Extension. After review it was determined that a thorough update of the plan would be required.

The Parks and Recreation Commission established a four-member Recreation Plan Sub-Committee to oversee and coordinate the development of the Plan. The Office of the Coordinator/Planner assisted as staff to this sub-committee. This sub-committee also worked to integrate this plan development into existing Parks and Recreation Commission programs/efforts in order to get increased public participation.

At the 2003 goal setting session, the Parks and Recreation Commission ranked the following to be very important issues in Antrim County.

- Trail development
- Additional parks and recreation resource development (especially on the east side of the county)
- Publicity of resources
- Public access to water

A county-wide opinion survey, numerous visioning sessions, and two Parks and Recreation forums all documented continued public interest in these issues.

Antrim County is fortunate to have a broad scope of recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors. Resources range from well-developed camping/recreational facilities to undeveloped forestlands. There are several organizations and County developed committees that manage these resources on behalf of the County (see Section B.). The Parks and Recreation Commission currently serves as a coordinating and advisory commission between these entities and the Antrim County Board of Commissioners.

The 2000 Parks and Recreation plan contained an exhaustive inventory of all existing local recreational facilities in the county. As part of the 2005 plan, the inventory was sent out to all local units of government for a review and update. Personal contacts were made by Commission members to encourage involvement by all entities. The data was collected for inclusion in the 2005 plan, as well as for the County's new interactive web site.

Components of the Action Program were presented at a Parks and Recreation forum in the fall of 2004. The individual county committee or organization responsible for the management of that resource developed components presented at the forum. Forum participants were encouraged to provide comments and suggestions on the individual components. Antrim County's parks and recreation management is performed by a multitude of county committee's, local units of government and organizations. These partnerships are an important part of the overall strategy to develop these needed park and recreation elements in Antrim County. Partnerships also allow for additional human resources to work on individual projects. Multiple partnerships also add the challenge for adequate communication and coordination. Two Parks and Recreations forums have

begun to facilitate better communication between the many entities, but more needs to be done. It is the consensus of the Parks and Recreation Commission that the County Board of Commissioners should seek to establish a Parks and Recreation Manager Position to oversee the entire County owned Parks and Recreational resources.

A draft of the Plan was presented to the Antrim County Board of Commissioners on January 13, 2005. The Plan was presented for final public comment at the Antrim County Board of Commissioners regularly scheduled meeting on February 10, 2005. The Plan was presented to the Board of Commissioners for final approval at its regularly scheduled meeting on February 10, 2005. In addition the Antrim County Parks and Recreation Commission is working with the County Planning Commission to assist it in adopting the 2005 Comprehensive Recreation Plan as a part of the County's new Comprehensive Master Plan.

- 2) **Plan Development Staff:** Since the 2005 Comprehensive Recreation Plan was developed in-house, county personnel or county appointees were the only ones directly responsible for its development. Mr. Jerry Basch, representing the general public, chairs the Antrim County Parks and Recreation Commission. Other members of the Commission are Mr. Mike Crawford, representing the County Board of Commissioners, Mr. Russ Blasdell, representing the general public, Mr. Stan Moore, MSU Extension, Mr. Allen Pecar, representing the general public, Mr. Jerome Dobrzelewski, from the County Road Commission, Ms. Linda Gallagher, representing the general public, Mr. Mike Meriwether, representing the Antrim Conservation District, and Mr. Mark Stone, the County Drain Commissioner. In addition, Mr. Howard Yamaguchi, from the County Office of the Coordinator/Planner, served as Secretary and staff to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The four-member Recreation Plan Sub-Committee was tasked with coordinating and developing the inventory database and the draft of the Recreation Plan. The members of this sub-committee are largely responsible for the overall development of the recreational inventory and the final form of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan. The members of the Sub-Committee are Stan Moore, Jerry Basch, Allen Pecar, and Russ Blasdell. Howard Yamaguchi, from the Office of the Coordinator/Planner, served as staff to the Sub-Committee and assisted in coordinating planning information from outside entities. All Parks and Recreation Commission members were responsible for the collection of recreational information and for the compilation of the recreational inventory database.

- 3) **Public Involvement Process:** The County Parks and Recreation Commission, in the development of this Plan, utilized an extensive public input process. Members of the general public were given standing invitations to attend monthly meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Input into the planning process was acquired through several different methods. Initially each local unit of government was contacted with a letter announcing that the County Parks and Recreation Commission was performing a Recreation Plan update. They were also provided with a copy of their respective recreational inventory from the 2000 Recreation Plan and asked to review these inventories and submit any changes. Follow-up phone calls were made to all local units to gather information on their recreational resources.

In 2001 an extensive countywide Citizens Survey was conducted. Several questions in the survey related to parks and recreation in Antrim County. Through the survey, citizens indicated which resources they used the most, which resources they wanted more of, and indicated that many of them were not aware of some of the resources.

In 2003 the Planning Commission and MSU Extension conducted a Land Use forum and 8 visioning sessions throughout Antrim County. Parks and recreational type responses varied by location within the county, with trails and more parks being emphasized in the eastern locations and water access, enforcement of regulations and water quality being emphasized in the western areas.

In 2004 the Parks and Recreation Commission conducted two forums. Public officials, those involved with parks and recreation, and the general public were invited. The first forum focused on awareness of our resources. A survey of participants was conducted using Option Finder with specific questions on the Quality, Quantity and Promotion of the county's parks and recreational resources. The second forum focused on components of the Community Recreation plan and specifically emphasized trails in Antrim County.

Prior to adoption of the plan by the Antrim County Board of Commissioners a public hearing was held on February 10, 2005 and generated the following comments:

- 4) **Planning Results:** The planning process has resulted in three deliverables.
  - 1) An approved Action Program detailing County priorities for the next five years.
  - 2) An approved Capital Improvements Schedule listing planning improvements and priorities over the next five years. These two deliverables will be detailed in Section E.
  - 3) An exhaustive recreational database of virtually every recreational facility in Antrim County. This database is searchable, in part, on controlling unit of government, type of facility, township, and accessibility status. The database will also be searchable on the Antrim County Community Center web page (<http://www.antrimcounty.org>). The existence of this database will be a very valuable tool for the County, as well as other local units of government, in maintaining an accurate record of all recreational facilities within the County of Antrim.