



AGENDA
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday August 10, 2021 4:30pm
Towner Road Park

REGULAR MEETING – 4:30PM

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC COMMENTS
3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - July 13, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes
5. COMMUNICATIONS
6. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - A. 2022-2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update
 1. Review of previous plan
 2. Review of accomplishments since 2017
 3. Review of Community Survey Questions
7. ACTION ITEMS
8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
9. PUBLIC COMMENTS
10. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS
11. ADJOURNMENT

Next Park Commission Meeting: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 4:30pm

All comments limited to 3 minutes, unless prior approval for additional time for good cause is obtained.

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Parks & Recreation Director, LuAnn Maisner:
2100 Gaylord C. Smith Court, Haslett, MI 48864 or 517.853.4600 - Ten Day Notice is Required.

Meeting Location: 2055 Towner Road, Haslett

Providing a safe and welcoming, sustainable, prime community.



A PRIME COMMUNITY
meridian.mi.us



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
PARK COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING **DRAFT** MINUTES
Meridian Township Service Center
Tuesday, July 13, 2021 4:30 pm

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael McDonald, Mark Stephens Stephens, Ami Van Antwerp, Mary Nardo-Farris, and Chair Amanda Lick

EXCUSED: None

STAFF: LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation; Kati Adams, Parks and Land Preservation Superintendent; Bridget Cannon, Administrative Assistant

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Lick called the meeting to order at 4:36 pm

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tim Morrissy, Meridian Township resident, recently retired from General Motors. He is interested in seeing how government works and looked at the Meridian Township website to see upcoming board meetings. The Park Commission meeting worked with his schedule.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner McDonald **MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED**, with the addition of the mosquito communication. Seconded by Commissioner Stephens.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - JUNE 8, 2021

Commissioner Farris noted an error in Item 5A First Line. Should be changed to "SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER MCDONALD." **MOVED BY COMMISSIONER MCDONALD AND SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER FARRIS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Mosquito Message

Due to dry spring conditions and recent rain and warm temperatures, the mosquito population has exploded in our community, which created a number of inquiries from residents. Staff drafted a message for the website and social media for posting. The commission recommended amending one of the links due to the link name.

B. Capital Improvement Program 2022-2027

The CIP is a planning and budgeting document that plans for six years of public improvements over \$5000 and reviewed annually. Director Maisner prepared an updated version for 2022-2027 for Park Commission review. At this meeting, the Park Commission focused on projects

for 2022 for budgeting purposes, and plan to do a complete review as part of the Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan update later this year.

C. 2022 Budget Request

Director Maisner presented the General Fund and Park Millage budgets pertaining to parks. A majority of the expenses are fixed and associated with salaries, benefits and motor pool. Since the salary and benefit information had not yet been entered by the Finance Director, the budget summary that was presented was estimated. Director Maisner will forward the final proposed budget to the Park Commission once everything is updated.

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. 2022 Capital Improvement Program 2022-2027

Commissioner Van Antwerp MOTION TO APPROVE 2022 OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM 2022-2027 INCLUDING:

- TOWNER ROAD PLAYGROUND - \$400,000
- PARKING LOT REPAVING/EXPANSION AT CENTRAL PARK SOUTH, MARSHALL PARK, AND NORTH MERIDIAN ROAD PARK – 200,000
- NEW PARK SIGNS AND SITE FURNISHINGS - \$50,000
- SHADE STRUCTURE AT TOWNER – 20,000
- FLOATING WATER FILTERING ISLANDS – 18,000

MOTION WAS SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER MCDONALD.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2022 Budget Request

Commissioner Stephens MOTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2022 BUDGET REQUEST FOR PARKS INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

- TOWNER ROAD PLAYGROUND - \$400,000
- PARKING LOT REPAVING/EXPANSION AT CENTRAL PARK SOUTH, MARSHALL PARK, AND NORTH MERIDIAN ROAD PARK – 200,000
- NEW PARK SIGNS AND SITE FURNISHINGS - \$50,000
- SHADE STRUCTURE AT TOWNER – 20,000
- FLOATING WATER FILTERING ISLANDS – 18,000

THE MOTION WAS SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER NARDO-FARRIS.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Pavilion Rentals – Rentals have exploded, and the calendar is full. Trash in the parks has been an issue for some time. Director Maisner is looking at additional dumpsters at several parks for maintenance staff to use as well as new software reservation and membership software to better manage pavilion rentals and dog park membership renewals.

B. Dog Park – There are currently 740 dog park memberships.

C. Summer Concert Series – Steve Spees opened the Summer Concert Series at Marketplace with an entertaining performance July 7. He played despite the rainy conditions and did a great job! Taylor Taylor, acoustic artist, will perform Wednesday, July 14.

D. Leap Art Grant – Local artist, Dane Porter, was selected for the LEAP Art Grant at Marketplace. He is working on a custom design based on a recent idea input meeting.

E. Artificial Ice – Marketplace on the Green - The artificial ice rink is ready to be ordered for installation at Marketplace, East Wing in November. The board discussed skate availability for residents and possibly partnering with area churches or businesses to obtain donated skates.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS – Tim Morrissy felt it was an interesting and passionate meeting. He thanked the Park Commission for their work.

9. OTHER MATTERS AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Bridget Cannon, Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant was introduced.

10. ADJOURNMENT

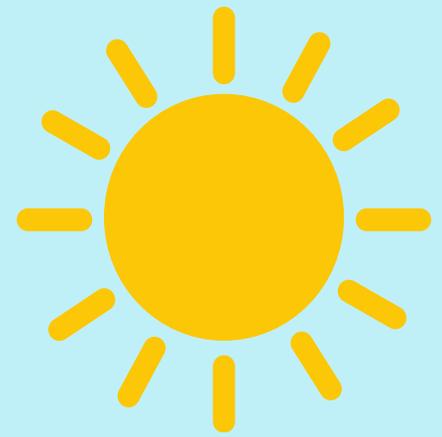
Hearing no objections, Chair Lick adjourned the meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled to be Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at 4:30 pm, Towner Road Park.

5. A.

Meridian Fishing Derby



Sunday, August 1st
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Meridian Historical Village
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos



Free for ages 16 and under



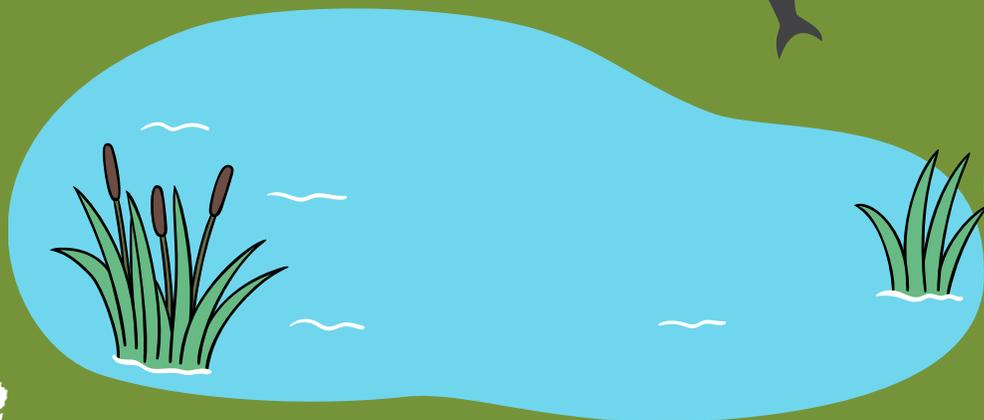
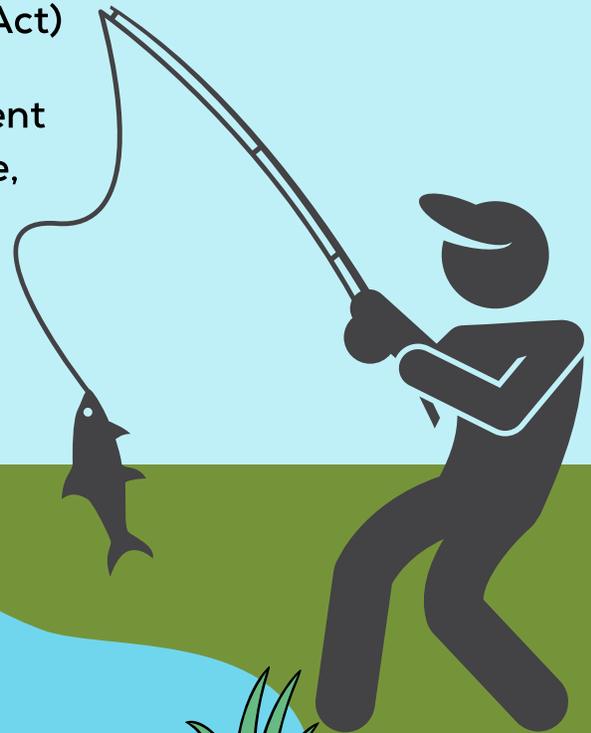
No license required, but we do encourage you to buy a \$2 volunteer license (which brings back money to MI from the Wallop Breaux Act)



Please come with your own fishing equipment
*we will provide equipment on a first come, first serve basis (limited supplies)



Activities include: learn to cast, fun with macroinvertebrates, games and of course fishing in the Historical Village pond!



VISION STATEMENT

“Creating Community through People, Parks and Programs”

MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the quality of life for Township residents and visitors by providing diverse park facilities and recreation opportunities where participants are able to learn and play, create and imagine, and be safe and secure utilizing qualified, professional staff and volunteers emphasizing community interaction.

Introduction

Our parks and recreation programs are perceived as an essential component of the community by meeting the needs of local residents and providing a major attraction for future township residents. It is intended that the Master Plan will fulfill the following goals:

1. Document broad-based public input regarding the current and future parks and recreation needs and priorities of Meridian Township residents.
2. Document the needs and desires of current Meridian Township.
3. Provide the Park Commission, department staff, and other community stakeholders with information to guide parks and recreation planning for the next five years and beyond.
4. Project the needs of current and future residents based upon demographic trends and public input.

This 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan describes the park and recreation opportunities in Meridian Township and establishes goals, objectives and an overall vision for our community’s parks and recreation future. It is intended to be a planning tool and guide for future decision making and application of resources.

The intent of this plan is to identify the current and future parks and recreation needs in order to continue providing programs and services to maintain and improve the quality of life in our community. This plan follows the guidelines and requirements established by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to provide eligibility for MDNR grant funding. The required plan content includes the following chapters:

- **Community Description.** This section includes the character and demographics of the population that is served by the park and recreation facilities and programs.
- **Administrative Structure.** This section outlines the township and parks and recreational organization structure, partnerships and volunteer efforts, and

relationships with the local school districts and other public agencies in regard to recreational, programming, and funding sources that are available for the parks and recreation department. Meridian Township is well organized, with a professional park staff that leverages available resources to maximize the recreation opportunities to its residents.

- **Recreation Inventory.** A thorough listing of park programs and facilities is included. Analysis of these facilities includes comparison to National Standards as well as how they meet local demands. An accessibility assessment helps identify opportunities to eliminate physical barriers to recreation. Funding sources for each park are included, as well as status of each grant funded park as part of the appendix. Land use and environmental features are identified that help shape opportunities and constraints for park development. The township has ample public landholdings, with only a percentage of developed parks supporting the demand for various activities. There are many recreation partners and volunteers that can and will continue to help support recreation to the community.
- **Planning Process.** The Parks and Recreation staff took the lead in directing the planning process and preparation of the master plan, with guidance from the elected Park Commission and other township staff members. ROWE Professional Services Company provided consulting services on areas of the plan that include public survey information and analysis from an objective third party perspective that helped direct the development of goals and objectives. The preparation of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan provided opportunities for citizens to play a key role in defining the future of parks and recreation in Meridian Township.
- **Goals and Objectives.** This section outlines the guidelines that shape the intent for future facility and program development within the community. They describe the character and vision that can be applied as opportunities are evaluated by the township regarding park and recreation improvements.
- **Action Plan.** The Action Program is the section of the plan that identifies how the township intends to meet, or work towards meeting goals and objectives over the next five years. Specific projects that were identified during the planning process are described and an explanation provided as to how they will meet the goals and objectives. The citizens of Meridian Township have continually demonstrated their support for the maintenance, stewardship and development of quality parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities. Past surveys revealed strong local support in favor of continued development and maintenance of the existing facilities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 2011-2015 PLAN:

The success of the 5 Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan is evident based on the following successes since the last plan written in 2011:

A. TOWNSHIP MILLAGES & ORDINANCES

The public support for these recommendations and the importance of parks and

recreation was substantiated by the successful passage of related ordinances and millages:

1. **New Park Millage** (.6667 mill passed in 2014 through 2025) provides funds for acquisition, maintenance, equipment and facility development.
2. **Previous Park Millage** (.317 mill renewed 1984-2016) provided funds for acquisition, maintenance, equipment and facility development.

B. GRANT AWARDS

Seven different grants have been awarded to the township since 2011 for a total of \$ 1,012,582, including three recently awarded by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and Land and Water Conservation Fund.

1. North Meridian Road Park, Pavilion, \$50,000 MNRTF (2015)
2. Greenfields Outdoor Exercise Gym, Wonch Park, \$17, 682 (2016)
3. Consumers Energy, Right Tree Right Place Grant, Ferguson Park, \$1,000 (2016)
4. Capital Region Community Foundation, Volunteer Tool Shed Grant, \$6,500 (2016)
5. Central Park Regional Trail Connector & Fishing Platform, \$272,500 MNRTF (2016)
6. Central Park/Historical Village, bridge and restroom building, \$150,000 LWCF (2016)
7. Property acquisition, 80-acres, "Ponderosa", \$514,900, MNRTF (2016)

C. LAND PRESERVE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Management plans were developed for the land preserves within the township to prioritize available resources to maintain the health of these ecosystems.

D. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Two full-time positions were added to the parks and recreation department in 2016:

- **Stewardship Coordinator:** This position was added in response to the department's growing commitment to facilities and natural areas management. The position is responsible for carrying out management plans for the natural areas. Activities involve invasive species management, recruiting and working with volunteers, and carrying out other duties set forth by the Park Commission and Land Preservation Advisory Board.
- **Grounds Maintenance Employee:** A full-time grounds maintenance employee was added in 2016, making a total of five full-time employees.
- Employees attend conferences and trainings annually to network and remain current on licenses and trends in their respective fields.

E. PARKS

1. ORLANDO PARK

- 2014 additional trees were planted in the park.
- 2016 a series of signs called a "Story Walk" were installed along the paved pathway. This project was fully funded by the Haslett Library. The book is

switched out each month. The signs invite the park visitor to participate in an activity, e.g. "Walk like a bear to the next page."

- 2016: New accessible play equipment was also added to the park. The new equipment is geared toward younger children and features a climbing slide structure that incorporates an artistic flower that spins and casts colorful shadows, swings, bongo drum toys, and a rocking piece for young children.

2. INDIAN HILLS PARK

- 2015: The Indian Hills Neighborhood Association purchased a bench for the park.

3. FERGUSON PARK

- 2013: Schoolchildren planted trees in the park through a Grand Learning Network grant.
- 2014: Numerous diseased and dead trees were removed from the park, due to the devastating infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer insect.
- 2016: School children planted 10 trees in the park with funding through the "Right Tree, Right Place" Consumer's Energy grant.
- 2016: The wooden park fencing along Okemos Road was replaced with black aluminum fencing.

4. HILLBROOK PARK

- 2016: There were major updates and improvements made to the park, particularly the tennis courts and playground area. The tennis courts were completely renovated and redesigned to include: one tennis court, three pickleball courts, and one half-court basketball court. New vinyl-coated fencing, nets and posts were installed. The gates and paved access point to the courts were replaced for the purpose of improving accessibility. The existing playground equipment was removed and replaced with two structures: one for young children and one for older children. Swings and benches were also added to the playground area and an accessible picnic table was added to the paved picnic area.
- 2016: An Ingham County drain project was planned for the wooded portion of the park which called for the removal of numerous trees. As a result, the County provided 29 beautiful new replacement trees. Many were installed around the play area to provide shade.

5. TOWAR PARK

- 2015: The baseball diamond was removed and replaced with an open grassy area that is utilized by open play space.

6. WONCH PARK

- 2012: A number of dead or dying trees were removed from the park. This allowed more sun to enter the park and made it more inviting to visitors.

- 2012: A paved universally-accessible loop pathway (2,055 lf) was constructed through a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. The path meanders along the river at a very gentle slope. For the purpose of improved accessibility, a paved access path was also constructed to link the existing play structure with the new paved pathway.
- 2016: Major improvements included a new pavilion and paved access path and patio with ample room for maneuvering, new recycled picnic tables, a drinking fountain with a water-bottle filler, parking area renovation, and the installation of outdoor exercise equipment. The aged pavilion was demolished and replaced with a new pavilion that includes electricity, something that is highly desirable for pavilion rentals. Accessible picnic tables made of recycled material replaced the old, worn picnic tables. The drinking fountain/water-bottle-filler, is the first of its kind in our park system and features a fountain at an accessible level for wheelchair users.
- 2016: The township was awarded a grant from Greenfields Outdoor Fitness which allowed us to install accessible outdoor exercise equipment. The exercise equipment is permanently installed in pods that are located along the side of the paved pathway.
- 2016: The wood fencing along Okemos Road was removed and replaced with black aluminum fencing. A new bright green traffic bridge was also constructed along Okemos Road in 2016. This bridge includes a wide, paved pedestrian pathway and greatly improved non-motorized transportation access to the park.
- 2016: Community painted mural was installed on the East facing wall of the restroom building at the park's entrance.

7. NEWTON ROAD PARK

- 2014: The athletic fields were developed using recommendations from MSU Turf Management experts, landscaping and a gravel parking area were installed.
- 2015: Park development included paving the 19-car parking lot, installing landscaping and a vinyl split-rail fence along Lake Lansing Road.
- 2016: A paved loop drop-off area was added to the parking area.

8. BRATTIN WOODS PARK

- 2010: The loop trail was improved with gravel surfacing and the Okemos Kiwanis constructed benches that were placed along the path.
- 2010: Gravel was spread along the entire 0.5-acre path through the park.

9. CENTRAL PARK

HISTORICAL VILLAGE

- 2011: Meridian Township received a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to construct an accessible fishing dock. This dock was constructed in the Historical Village section of Central Park. In addition to the fishing dock, an interpretive sign, bench, and accessible paved pathway were added to the dock area.

- 2011: An Eagle Scout candidate constructed a storage locker for fishing rods and tackle that are available free-of-charge to park visitors.
- 2013: An accessible game table and paved access pad were installed near the Farmers' Market pavilion, using funds from a grant from LINC (Liaison for Inter-Neighborhood Connectivity, a local group).
- 2015: The Claire Twohy gardens located near the pavilion were renovated to include butterfly-friendly plantings. An interpretive sign was installed near the gardens.
- Numerous shade trees have been added to Central Park in recent years, which is important in all of our parks due to the devastation of the Emerald Ash Borer infestation that began around 2006.
- 2015: An Eagle Scout candidate constructed benches along the fishing pond.
- 2016: A master plan was developed for all of Central Park, including Central Park South and Nancy Moore Park. The intent of the master plan is to develop improved non-motorized transportation connections; improved accessibility; and to develop a park identity for this busy and somewhat disconnected park area.

10. HARTRICK PARK

- 2011: Township enhanced the wetlands with native plantings.
- 2012: Eagle Scout candidates constructed a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile long gravel trail along the south edge of the park through the wooded area. An additional section of gravel was added by the township in to create a connection between the Okemos softball diamonds and Hartrick Park.
- 2013: Paving was added around the flagpole and bleachers to improve accessibility.
- 2015-2016: Certified monarch-waystation gardens were added to the park. The gardens were planted by schoolchildren.
- 2016: Covered dugouts were installed on the two ball diamonds.

11. NANCY MOORE PARK

- 2015: The pavilion was re-sided and a memorial garden was developed near the ball diamonds with an accessible path and bench. Other improvements included ball diamond safety fencing, new recycled and accessible picnic tables, paved pathway repairs, parking lot resurfacing, the installation of handmade benches by the Okemos Kiwanis, garden renovations, and the planting of eight trees from a Michigan State University Federal Credit Union "Go Green" grant program.
- 2016: An Eagle Scout candidate constructed our first Gaga ball pits.
- 2016: The sand volleyball courts were renovated with new Lake Michigan beach sand.

12. NORTH MERIDIAN ROAD PARK

- 2011: The heated restroom, a drinking fountain, and accessible paved pathways were constructed.
- 2015: Two sand volleyball courts were constructed.

- 2015: The Township received a Trust Fund grant to construct a universally accessible pavilion. This pavilion project is planned for 2017.

13. TOWNER ROAD PARK

- 2007: Master planning for the park began and plans were finalized in 2016.
- 2015: The Township acquired a 1.58 parcel that adjoins the park on the north-west corner. The additional land is designed as active parkland. This addition resulted in a total park area of 23.58 acres.
- 2016: The 1.58 acre parcel of land originally had residential structures and they were demolished and the area was graded. The additional land will be utilized for park development.

14. HARRIS NATURE CENTER

- 2012: The Nature Exploration Area is a place where people can intuitively interact with nature. This project was begun in 2012 with the creation of a climbable Turtle Sculpture. Additional features are the Log Jam for climbing and balance; the Sticks and Stones for building; the Spider Web for climbing and contemplation; the Michigan Fossil Dig for digging and imaginative play; 3 interpretive signs provide fossil education; overlook platform; the Gathering Circle includes a stage, bench seating and available electricity for organized programs or general public seating and play.
- 2014: Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) replaced the Van Atta Road bridge by the Nature Center entrance and Legg Park trail entrance. The bridge includes a pedestrian walkway on the west side. As part of their construction plan, the ICRD constructed a new fishing dock/platform on the bank of the Red Cedar River.
- 2015: Lansing Oar and Paddle Club (LOAPC) constructed a rustic canoe launch on the east side of Van Atta Road.

15. EASTGATE PARK

- 2014: Numerous large trees were donated by a resident and were planted near the bicycle pump track and wooded edge of the park.
- 2014: Mountain bike enthusiasts added various stunts to the pump track.

16. LEGG PARK

- 2013: Plans were developed to include additional recreational amenities including a dog park and habitat improvements in the southeastern portion of the park.
- 2015: The park entrance area was improved. A portion of the park entry drive was paved and a small five car parking area was developed. Numerous large trees were donated by a resident and were planted near the park entrance.

17. TED BLACK WOODS PARK

- 2011 a small gravel parking area, fencing and gate were added at the Van Atta Road entrance to the park. An interpretive sign to recognize Dr. Ted

Black was installed near the trail head. Eagle Scout candidates have made numerous park improvements that include benches, a wetland overlook, and trail development and improvement.

- 2011: An Eagle Scout candidate made trail improvements to the park.
- 2012: An Eagle Scout candidate developed a gravel path and made four Aldo Leopold benches for the Van Atta Road entrance area.
- 2016: A wetland overlook was constructed by an Eagle Scout Candidate near the Van Atta Road entrance.

18. MERIDIAN SENIOR CENTER

- In 2011, the Meridian Senior Center left the umbrella of Okemos Community Education and was moved to the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department.
- In 2013, hours were increased to full-time for the Senior Center Coordinator and one additional part-time assistant was added.
- Also in 2013, seven additional handicap parking spaces were added near the entrance.
- Numerous interior improvements were made in 2014 including: upgraded lighting, new furniture, a new fireplace, paint and window treatments.
- Additional improvements were made 2016 including new flooring.

VII. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHIES

1. Provide accessible facilities and leisure opportunities for all persons regardless of their physical and socio-economic characteristics.
2. Efficiently employ Township resources, in concert with other public, private and volunteer resources, to provide a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities and avoid duplication of services where unnecessary.
3. Actively seek the most appropriate acquisition and uses of community open space and natural features to meet the community's needs for active, structured recreation, as well as passive enjoyment of the outdoors.
4. Plan for the continued availability of financial, physical and personnel resources to support the parks and recreation system.

B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. **Accessibility**
 - a. Increased multi-use trails in parks and natural areas.
 - b. Improved trail maintenance and trail signage.
 - c. Improve amenities for universal access in all park facilities.
 - d. More year-round restrooms in parks.
 - e. More benches along trails and pathways.
 - f. Improve connectivity between parks.
2. **Safety**
 - a. Crime prevention through environmental design.
 - b. Safety through improved maintenance.
 - c. Safety through increased park usage.
3. **Environmental Sustainability**

- a. An emphasis on environmental sustainability (new buildings and renovations) – Energy saving opportunities.
 - b. Improved non-motorized transportation connections between parks.
- 4. Financial Stewardship**
- a. Increase partnerships and collaborative opportunities.
 - b. Seek additional grant support.
 - c. Seek additional seasonal staff for maintenance support.
 - d. Seek sponsorships and donations.
 - e. Continue to encourage and utilize volunteerism.
- 5. Environmental Stewardship**
- a. Monitor and remove invasive species, encourage native plantings and educate the public about ecosystem health.
 - b. Work cooperatively with the Land Preservation Advisory Board and Environmental Commission in stewardship planning and implementation.
 - c. Monitor and respond to early signs of erosion, disease, and facility deterioration.
 - d. Identify and protect rare and sensitive species in the parks where feasible.
- 6. Education**
- a. Utilize recreation as a vehicle to educate and instill positive personal attributes such as ethics, values, citizenship, sportsmanship and leadership.
 - b. Expand the educational outreach of the Harris Nature Center by adding interpretive signage at the entrance and along trails of our natural areas to facilitate self-directed and self-paced nature study.
 - c. Expand and encourage additional educational outreach of the Meridian Historical Village and Nokomis Learning Center by adding educational/interpretive signage to the grounds surrounding the buildings to facilitate self-directed and self-paced cultural education.

- d. Improve awareness regarding the qualities, benefits and diversity of the park system.
- e. Expand Harris Nature Center environmental programs and outreach throughout the entire park system.

7. Recreation and Events

- a. Encourage and expand the use of parks for exercise and stress relief regimens for all ages and abilities.
- b. Expand and seek opportunities for collaborations, partnerships and shared services.
- c. Seek grants and sponsorships to support recreation services and events.
- d. Provide healthy outlets for teens and adolescents.
- e. Provide programs and services during a variety of days and times to reach the greatest number of participants.
- f. Provide activities that focus on health, wellness and physical fitness and positive youth development.
- g. Provide recreational activities and programs to meet the diverse needs of the community.

8. Parks and Facilities

- a. Support Farmers' Market, Snell Towar Recreation Center, and Harris Nature Center operations and facility improvements.
- b. Provide diverse amenities in the park system to accommodate citizens' interests and needs.
- c. Provide information and facilities that will encourage self-directed recreation.
- d. Focus capital investment on existing facility renovation and improvement.

9. Volunteerism and Community Engagement

- a. Identify volunteer commitment level (short term vs long term) and create projects to address these groups
- b. Communicate with various methods to maximize amount of volunteer engagement

- c. Encourage passive volunteer efforts by providing information on projects and empowering volunteer leaders (self-directed stewardship)

10. Communication

- a. Maintain production of Family Fun Guide as an effective communication tool.
- b. Develop a marketing plan to be more efficient and effective with various methods of communication.

VIII. Action Program

This section highlights a series of recommended actions that resulted from the process of preparing this Master Plan. The recommended actions are intended to guide the Park Commission and staff when making decisions regarding the priorities for the park and recreation needs of Meridian Township residents, businesses, and visitors for the next five years and beyond.

The action program was developed based upon input gathered from the community survey, public input meetings, township-wide planning efforts, demographic data, land use trends and efforts of adjacent communities. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP), developed by the Park Commission and staff for future park projects, outlines future development projects and their associated costs (Appendix D). Many of the top park or facility additions identified through the process are in alignment with proposed park improvement projects in the CIP.

It is the responsibility of the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide services and programs that meet the needs of residents. The Department must be alert to the population and demographic trends in the Township and adjust accordingly. Meridian Township not only has to be aware of the aging population trend, the large population of college aged residents, but also the active children and families in the community.

It has been demonstrated that the provision of restrooms, multi-purpose trails, open space, greenways, improved Farmers' Market facility, indoor basketball facilities, and athletic fields are important to the residents. The Department must continue to set common goals and form partnerships with other departments and community organizations in order to enhance the quality of life of all residents, businesses, and visitors.

The recommendations and actions are summarized below:

A. Capital Improvement Program

To meet the recommendations and actions, the Park Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation have identified a series of capital projects for the next six years. These projects will address the needs identified in this Master Plan and are reviewed every year. Additional public input is obtained prior to final planning of each project. Appendix D summarizes the capital projects that are detailed in the 2017-2022 Meridian Township Six Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). To keep connected to the most recent CIP Plan, visit www.meridian.mi.us.

3. Parks and Facilities Improvement and Maintenance

a. Central Park

The Farmers' Market is located in Central Park, which is also home to some of our most popular athletic fields, paved and unpaved trails, Nokomis Learning Center, and the Meridian Historical Village. Central Park has been called the "Heart of Meridian" and is well-loved and well-used by many residents. In order to continue to meet the recreational needs of the residents, a master plan will be developed to evaluate opportunities for:

- Universal accessibility
- Greater use of water features
- Multi-use trails
- Farmers' Market relocation
- Splash pad
- Restroom building
- Pavilion
- Bridge into Village
- Covered basketball, ice rink, and parking
- Sculpture garden
- Overlook shelter
- Playground
- Outdoor interpretation in the Historical Village and around Nokomis.
- Doggie Playground
- Other outdoor recreation facilities

b. Towner Road Park

A strong need for athletic fields in the northern portion of our community has been identified for a number of years in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and is supported by the large number of youth participating in sports programs. Plans include:

- Athletic fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, and baseball
- Pavilion and restroom
- Play equipment
- Accessible loop trail
- Interpretive signage
- Parking lot
- Pickleball

c. Legg Park

Plans are being created for the continued development of Meridian Riverfront Park, Legg entrance, 3891 Van Atta Road, Okemos, by designing and implementing a master plan for amenities including:

- Dog park
- Pavilion
- Driveway improvements
- Universally accessible trails

- Trail improvements
 - Habitat improvements
 - Footbridge replacement
- d. **Harris Nature Center**
Enhance the Harris Nature Center by adding indoor and outdoor universally accessible activity space and amenities to meet growing demand, including:
- Pavilion
 - Outdoor restroom building
 - Natural playground
 - River access/launch
 - Outdoor interpretive signage and displays
- e. **North Meridian Road Park**
Improvement plans include:
- Expanded parking
 - Trail improvements and signage
 - Shade structures
 - Landscaping
- f. **Wonch Park Improvements**
Wonch Park is located on Okemos Road and the Red Cedar River within the Okemos DDA District. Implement the Master Plan which includes:
- Stream bank stabilization improvements
 - Fishing dock/canoe launch
 - New restroom facility
 - Landscaping
 - Connector trail to downtown Okemos
 - Wi-Fi connection
- h. **Hillbrook Park**
Future plans include:
- Restroom building
 - Trail improvements and signage
- i. **Marshall Park**
Plans include:
- Accessible loop trail
 - New Playground Equipment
 - Landscaping
- j. **Meridian Riverfront Park**
Meridian Riverfront Park extends along the Red Cedar River for approximately 2.5 miles. Plans include:

- Universally accessible river trail including boardwalk and/or hard surfaces and bridges
- Trail and interpretive signage.

k. Nancy Moore Park

Future plans for Nancy Moore include:

- Addition of a second pavilion
- Accessible playground
- Paved loop trail
- Parking improvements

l. Newton Road Park

Future plans for Newton Road Park include:

- Playground
- Loop path around perimeter

m. Ottawa Hills Park

Future plans include:

- Playground
- Loop path around perimeter

n. Eastgate Park

Future plans for include:

- Pave parking lot

o. Farmers Market Building Relocation

Visiting the Farmers' Market is a very popular activity for residents. For the past forty-three years the market has been held at the pavilion in Central Park near the Town Hall. However, the successful market has outgrown the facility and should be relocated to an area that offers more parking and a larger pavilion for the vendors. Plans have been developed to relocate the Farmers' Market to the Meridian Mall, which lies just south of Central Park. This public/private partnership will utilize existing infrastructure as well as attract new visitors to the mall.

4. Additional Considerations

a. Trails/Pathways

A popular item identified during the public input process was the continued development of multi-purpose trails or pathways in existing parks and pathways that link the parks together. This will provide non-motorized access to parks and recreation facilities to satisfy the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and joggers, and to facilitate use of natural areas, including the Meridian Riverfront Park. Walking, hiking, and bicycling were identified as some of the most popular leisure activities in the community survey and during other public meetings. Enhancing the trails would also serve

persons with disabilities and bicycle commuters by providing much improved access through the parks. Also a priority is improved trail maintenance, better trail signage and more benches. The Township's non-motorized bicycle/pathway plan typically constructs paths alongside roadways, but there are many opportunities to extend these pathways into the park system to create a large network of trails.

b. Watertrail/River/Fishing Access:

Residents identified the need for safe, clear river access for canoe and kayak navigation. The Watertrail in the Appendix plan identifies opportunities for access sites and signage that will provide a safe and enjoyable paddling experience.

b. Sports Fields and Facilities:

There is a need to upgrade some of the existing sports facilities to ensure the safety and enjoyment of participants and spectators. Facilities should be developed or upgraded to provide a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities. It is also very important for the Parks and Recreation Department to recognize trends and to respond to our residents. Pickleball has recently become very popular and the plan is to develop four courts at Towner Road Park.

d. Land Acquisition and Easement Agreements:

The long-term potential of the Red Cedar River corridor has yet to be realized. Future land acquisitions and easement agreements should be pursued with the goal of eventually providing a pedestrian/bicycle trail system that links the Harris Nature Center to the Bicycle/Pedestrian trail system in Meridian Township. It would also serve as a major attraction for new residents and tourists.

In order to maximize the potential benefits of open space and natural areas, it is necessary that there is increased coordination of efforts between the Land Preservation Advisory Board and the Park Commission. It is important that new developments in Meridian Township also be encouraged to incorporate parks and recreation amenities that complement the efforts of the Department and Park Commission. The benefits of these collaborations will enhance the potential for recreation, conservation and stewardship.

B. Programs and Services

Based on the community survey, respondents were very satisfied with the programs and services being provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation. It is clear that residents value the potential benefits of leisure/free time activities, especially those related to wellness.

The results indicated that residents were appreciative of the Farmers' Market and the other special events/festivals offered by the Department. They also suggested that additional special events and festivals are needed that focus on local culture and history. Focus strategies for the next five years includes:

- Increase activities for families
- Increase activities for toddler and preschoolers during evening and weekends
- Additional programs that serve adolescents and teenagers.
- Because older adults are working longer, offer opportunities for active recreation for them in the evenings and on weekends.
- Foster greater cooperation and collaboration with schools, surrounding governmental units and business.
- Provide additional special events, also events during the week at lunchtime

C. Communication

Effectively reaching our community and keeping them informed is a primary goal and need to be successful.

- Creatively promote all the parks in the park system.
- Meet with park neighbors to discuss stewardship and to identify future development opportunities.
- Continue to publish and distribute the "Family Fun Guide" to all residents in the community annually.
- Continue to utilize the website, Facebook and Twitter to promote programs and activities.
- Continue to utilize HOM-TV to promote parks and recreation programs throughout the community.
- Continue to operate quality programs to take advantage of the least expensive form of promotion – word of mouth.

D. Funding Sources

Various grant opportunities and programs exist that are useful in leveraging funding for projects and property acquisition. A summary of some of the common funding resources for recreation in the state of Michigan include:

- **Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (MNRTF)** – Provides funding assistance for the purchase of land (or interest in land) for recreation or protection of land because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty, and the development of

recreation facilities. This assistance is directed at creating and improving outdoor recreational opportunities and providing protection to valuable natural resources. The improvement grants are between \$15,000 and \$300,000 with a required minimum local match of 25%. Acquisition grants vary depending upon the value of property and local match amount; therefore there is not a minimum or maximum amount. This grant is ideal for implementing community park plans and for land acquisition in the future. Applications are due in April and September of each year for acquisition projects and April of each year for development projects.

- **Michigan Recreation Passport** – Provides capital improvement plans and development projects in communities throughout Michigan. Projects must be in public recreation use for the life of the project rather than perpetuity. Indoor recreation facilities and existing park locations are eligible for the grant. The primary focus is on improving and renovating existing parks. The application deadline is April 1st, with a November grant award announcement. Duration of the grant usually run 3 years. Minimum grant request must be \$7,500 with a maximum request of \$75,000 starting in 2017; there is a 25% match by the local municipality or organization. The 25% match can either be cash/credit (for locally assumed costs including labor and equipment) donations of goods and services from non-government entities, cash donations from non-governmental entities or repurposed land.
- **Aquatic Habitat Grant Program** – The Aquatic Habitat Grant Program (AHCP) began in October 2013 and will operate each year that funding is available. A total of approximately \$1,250,000 will be available for the second round of 2014 grand funding from the Game and Fish Protection Fund. The AHCP's purpose is to improve fish and other aquatic organism's populations by protecting intact and rehabilitating degraded aquatic habitat. Grant applications are due in November with award information available in April.
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** – LWCF provides funding assistance for communities to acquire and develop land for outdoor recreation. The minimum award is \$15,000 and the maximum of \$500,000 with a 50% local match. The eligibility criterion emphasizes preservation of natural resources such as waterways. This grant is ideal for implementing community park plans for land acquisition in the future.
- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** – TAP is a competitive grant program that funds projects such as non-motorized paths, streetscapes and historic preservation of transportation facilities that enhance Michigan's intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options. These investments support place-based economic development by offering transportation choices, promoting walkability and improving the quality of life. The program uses federal transportation funds designed by Congress for these types of activities. TAP grant funding requires matching funds of at least 20 percent of the eligible project cost.

- **Public-Private or Public-Public Partnerships** – Reduced funding at the public and private sector has created a need for various partnerships between public and private entities as well as between two or more public entities, to accommodate specialized large-scale recreation demands.
- **Donations** – Businesses, corporations, private clubs, community organizations and individuals will often contribute to recreation and other improvement programs to benefit the communities in which they are located. Private sector contributions may be in the form of monetary contributions, the donation of land, the provision of volunteer services, or the contribution of equipment or facilities.
- **Private Foundations** - There are various foundations and grant sources with specific criteria. Many can be identified through community foundations and other listings.

Conclusion:

Meridian Township has been successful using a blend of various funding sources to leverage available resources. Each future project should be evaluated against the scope of each project and the limitations and conditions that some grant sources attach.

2. Community Input Meeting

A public input meeting / workshop / open house was conducted for residents to voice their opinions and recommendations with the Park Commission and staff. The meeting was held on November 21, 2016 with a total of 35 participants. The meeting was advertised with a postcard mailing and notices in the local East Lansing/Meridian Towne Courier newspaper.

3. Notice of Availability of the Plan for Public Review

(See Appendix J).

4. Notice for Public Hearing and Plan Adoption

To be completed. (See Appendix K).

The Meridian Township parks, recreation and open space system exists to serve the needs and desires of the residents of the Township and the Meridian community by providing a full spectrum of recreational opportunities, while enhancing the visual quality of neighborhoods and the Township as a whole. Historically, Meridian Township's parks, recreation and open space system has been looked upon as one of the most important elements in the quality of life for Meridian Township residents.

The Park and Recreation system-wide goals have not changed that significantly from the previous plan. This is because after gathering the public input, staff recognized that even though some issues have changed, the overriding goals and objectives are still relevant and respond to the desires and concerns of residents today.

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP PARKS and Recreation 2017 Annual Report



VISION

“Creating Community through People, Parks and Programs”

MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the quality of life for Township residents and visitors by providing diverse park facilities and recreation opportunities where participants are able to learn and play; create and imagine; and be safe and secure; utilizing qualified, professional staff and volunteers emphasizing community interaction.

In 2017, the Parks and Recreation Department continued their dedication to make Meridian Township a more vital and vibrant place to live through programs, special events, and development, protection, and management of publicly-owned parks, grounds and natural areas. This was accomplished through the dedicated efforts of the Park Commission, Land Preservation

Advisory Board, a professional and enthusiastic staff of 15 full-time parks and recreation employees, numerous part-time and seasonal staff, and many passionate volunteers from the community working in concert to manage 910 acres of parkland, 76 miles of pedestrian/bicycle pathway, 20 miles of nature trails, the Harris Nature Center, Snell-Towar Recreation Center, Meridian Senior Center, year-around Farmers' Market, Meridian Historical Village, 85 acres of Township grounds, 864.2-acres of land preserves, two (2) cemeteries, and a wide variety of community recreation programs, special events and senior activities.

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING DIVISIONS:

FUNDING:

- **Parks** - .6667 mill (2014-2025), General Fund, fees and charges, grants, volunteer support, donations
- **Recreation** - 1/3 of 1/10th mill Community Services Millage (2012-2021), General Fund, fees and charges, volunteer support and donations
- **Land Preservation** - .33 mill Land Preservation Millage (2010-2019), volunteers
- **Meridian Senior Center** - .133 mill Community Services Millage (2012-2021), Okemos Public Schools, fees and charges, and volunteers
- **Meridian Historical Village** - Managed by the volunteer non-profit organization Friends of Historic Meridian and is funded through grants, donations, fees and charges, and a small General Fund contribution
- **Farmers' Market** - Vendor Fees (self-sustaining)
- **Harris Nature Center** - Park Millage, fees and charges.
- **Snell-Towar Recreation Center** - General Fund, donations, and grants
- **Deer Management Program** - Park Millage, Land Preservation Millage, and General Fund
- **Cemeteries** - Fees and charges, General Fund
- **Pedestrian Bicycle Pathway Millage** - .33 Mills (2016-2027), grants

PARK COMMISSION

The Meridian Township Park Commissioners are elected to 4-year terms and have the responsibility of setting policy and direction for acquisition, development and maintenance of parks. In 2017, they held nine (9) regular meetings, one (1) work session, two (2) special meetings, one (1) joint meeting with the Township Board and other boards and commissions and one (1) joint meeting with the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

Mark Stephens was re-appointed as the Park Commission's representative to the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

Park Commission Members:

Michael McDonald, Chair
Mark Stephens, Vice Chair
Amanda Lick
Annika Brixie Schaetzl
Richard Baker (resigned March, 2017)
Courtney Wisinski (appointed June, 2017)

PARKS

Thanks in large part to the approved Park Millage in 2014 and successful grant requests, the department was able to accomplish many projects that will maintain and improve the integrity of our valuable park system. These projects included:

1. **Towner Road Park:** located in Haslett, this park began construction in late spring and due to weather delays, will continue through spring of 2018. The park contains athletic fields, walking paths, pavilion, restrooms, pickleball courts, and parking. A ribbon cutting is tentatively scheduled for September of 2018.
2. **Harris Nature Center:**
 - a. **Beaver Lodge** -Local architect David VanderKlok, Studio Intrigue, has designed and built a new amenity for the Nature Exploration Area, a Beaver Lodge replica. He has donated his time, skills and money to design and construct an oversized beaver lodge structure comprised of all natural materials. The project will be completed in the spring of 2018.
 - b. **Boulder Garden:** This new educational exhibit is located in the center island that includes large boulders with signage that identifies various indigenous rocks to Michigan;
 - c. **Generator** – In preparation of future power outages, a new building generator was installed.
 - d. **Well** – earlier this year, water quality testing alerted us to the need to drill a new well. This work was completed in late spring.
 - e. **Replaced parking lot lights** with LED lighting.
 - f. **New split-rail fence was installed** around the Nature Exploration Area as an Eagle Scout Project led by Kaden Bartlett.
3. **Interpretive Signage in the Historical Village:** The Haslett Okemos Rotary Club is funding six new interpretive signs for the Historical Village that artistically describe life in the late 1800's and the history of the structures located in the Village. They will be installed in the spring of 2018.
4. **Mobile Tool Shed:** Funded by the Capital Community Foundation through a \$6,500 grant, this trailer is being used to support various park and land preserve volunteer projects.
5. **ART!:**
 - a. **Three "Disco Fish" sculptures** were donated to the Park Commission from the Meridian Township DDA this year. Time and funds were expended to repair and reinforce them before they were installed at Wonch Park.
 - b. **Community Mural** painted during the 2017 "Celebrate Meridian" event was installed in Hillbrook Park in the fall. This makes the second mural to be installed in our parks. A new mural is scheduled for creation during this years' Celebrate Festival.
6. **Farmers' Market Relocation Project:** Progress has been made with creating a public – private partnership with CBL Properties for moving forward with "Marketplace on the Green" pavilion and amenities. CBL is in the process of developing the land lease and staff has been working to obtain funding for the project from multiple sources. The proposed location is located along the greenspace near Studio C on Central Park Drive.



MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP PARK TRAILS

1. Completed new trailhead signs for the following parks:

- a. Ted Black Woods
- b. North Meridian Road Park
- c. Tacoma Hills Park
- d. Hartrick Park
- e. Brattin Woods
- f. Forest Hills Park
- g. Meridian Riverfront Park (Eastgate, Harris & Legg)



2. Installed new signs and trail markers in Ted Black Woods

3. Completed new print maps for Ted Black Woods

4. Began working with Cara Maney on interactive map of township parks for the website

5. Uploaded the following trail systems to the AllTrails app:

- a. Ted Black Woods
- b. North Meridian Road Park
- c. Brattin Woods
- d. Hillbrook Park
- e. Harris Nature Center
- f. Eastgate Park
- g. Hartrick Park

6. 2018 Projection:

- a. Install the remaining signs that are completed along with trail markers and print maps
- b. Complete Central Park (includes Nancy Moore & Central Park South), Towner Road Park, Wonch Park, Sander Farm and Hillbrook Park signs, trail markers, installation and print maps
- c. Begin trail updates and upgrades in all parks where needed
- d. Finish loading remaining parks onto the AllTrails app.

GRANTS AWARDED FOR UPCOMING PROJECTS

The Township has been very successful with its search for financial support for infrastructure improvements and acquisition. Funding that has been committed includes:

1. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund

- a. Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector (central park) \$279,500
- b. Pavilion at Harris Nature Center \$50,000
- c. Pavilion North Meridian Road Park \$50,000
- d. Ponderosa Land Preserve Acquisition (90-acres) \$450,000

2. Land and Water Conservation Fund

- a. Historical Village footbridge + restroom building \$150,000
- b. Composting Restroom System at HNC \$50,000

3. Ingham County Parks and Trails Millage

- a. The Big Fix – surface and bridge improvements \$663,000
- b. Phase I of MSU-Lake Lansing \$950,000

4. Farmers' Market Relocation Project:

a. Capital Region Community Foundation	\$ 75,000
b. Consumers Energy foundation	\$ 25,000
c. Meridian EDC	\$ 10,000
d. Haslett-Okemos Kiwanis Club	\$100,000

DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2017 was the seventh year for the Deer Management Program that runs from October 1 through January 1 each year. A total of 66 volunteer hunters were assigned to 30 township and county-owned properties. This highly managed program requires each volunteer hunter to first apply for consideration, complete a criminal background check, participate in an archery proficiency test at the MSU Demmer Center and participate in a program orientation. Communication is an important element in the success of this program. A Meridian Deer Management Facebook page was created to encourage communication between hunters, emailing. All hunters were required to report all harvests to Jane Greenway (Parks and Land Management Coordinator), or Nick Wing (Parks and Recreation Intern) that included the following information: date harvested, sex, and C.W.D Survey Tag Number. Each deer head was submitted to the MDNR check-station for CWD testing. None of the deer harvested in the Meridian Deer Management Program tested positive for CWD. Since the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease in May 2015, many elements of the original program have been impacted. The donation of venison to local food banks has been suspended and baiting is no longer permitted. Finding willing processors has also been a challenge the last three years. **TOTAL DEER HARVESTED for the 2017 program: 80.**

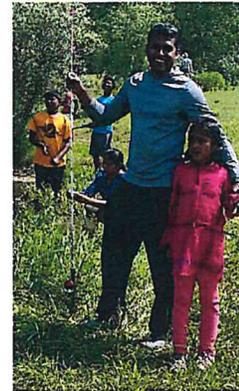
RECREATION AND SPECIAL EVENTS

1. **Family Winter Fun Weekends** - Over 2,000 people participated in the following events in January and February: Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk; Family Moonlight Sledding at North Meridian Road Park; Moonlight Skiing and Snowshoeing; Howl at the Moon; cross country ski and snowshoe classes; Winter Wonderland at Harris Nature Center; "Meridian Swims" at Michigan Athletic Club; and target practice training at the Demmer Center (18 events).
2. **Chinese New Year Event** - Provided assistance to the Greater Lansing Chinese Association in presenting the 2017 Chinese New Year Celebration in Meridian Mall on February 11 from 1:00pm-4:30pm. The event included a Lion Parade, entertainment, activity booths, fashion show, and games. Approximately 2,000 attended. 2017 was the year of the rat.
3. **"Celebrate Meridian" Festival - Independence Day Celebration** - The event this year was coordinated with the Township's 175th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, July 1 and welcomed over 30,000 visitors to the community. The event included musical entertainment, dance performances, arts and crafts fair, business fair, farmers' market, children's game area, dancing, beer and wine tent, car show, pet adoption, Heritage Festival, food truck rally, and FIREWORKS. On Friday, June 30, 135 runners participated in the 5K race through Central Park.



4. **Meridian Arts & Crafts Marketplace** – The Market consisted of 20-25 crafters and artisans from the Greater Lansing Area featuring a wide variety of items. The Marketplace was hosted on the fourth Sunday from June through September from 11 am – 4 pm and was managed by volunteer Market Coordinator, Sheryl Stephens.

5. **Fishing in Meridian:** Hosted family fishing event in June in conjunction with Michigan DNR Free Fishing Weekend with a record number of participants: 66 youth and 88 adults. The event was held in the Historical Village pond in Central Park.



6. **Youth and Adult Sports:**

a. **Okemos K - 8th Grade youth soccer:** A total of 943

- Spring season: 569
- Fall season: 374

b. **Okemos K - 6th Grade youth flag football program:** A total of 98 participants

c. **Haslett K - 5th Grade Youth Recreation Association (HYRA) youth sports programs:**

- Haslett K-1 soccer 114
- Haslett K-6th basketball 257
- Haslett flag football 111
- Haslett t-ball 77

d. **1st-8th Grade Youth Recreation Baseball & Softball Programs:**

- e. Haslett Softball Program: 37
- f. Okemos Softball Program: 93
- g. Haslett Baseball Program: 119
- h. Okemos Baseball Programs: 128

i. **Sporties for Shorties:** 230 (4,5 and 6 year olds)

j. **Adult Kickball Leagues** (Summer & Fall): 29 teams 352 participants

k. **Adult Softball Leagues** (Summer): 21 teams

l. **4 on 4 Sand Volleyball Leagues** (Summer & Fall): 33 teams, 165 participants

m. **Adult Golf Clinics/Classes/Leagues:**

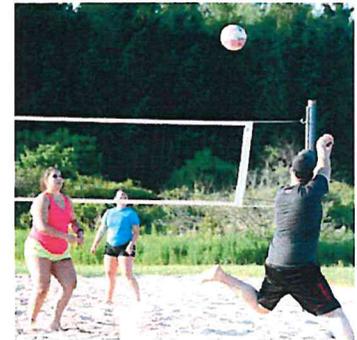
- Meridian Sun Ladies Night Out Leagues & Clinics: 43 participants
- Meridian Sun Junior Golf Leagues: 118 participants
- Meridian Sun Tee Fore Toddlers Classes: 45 participants Meridian Sun Golf Wednesday Night Drop-In Program: 6-8 couples per week/15-week

n. **Pickleball Clinics at Hillbrook Park:** Six (6) pickleball clinics were provided for 26 participants (youth, adult and seniors) from July –September. Open play was offered on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9-11am and Thursday evenings.

o. **Senior Exercise Program in the Meridian Mall:** 113 registered participants. The program meets three days per week year-round.

p. Provided recreation administrative services to the **City of Williamston** under a contractual agreement for the following youth sports programs:

- Softball: 70
- Baseball: 59
- Tee ball: 58
- Flag football: 69
- Basketball: 203



7. **Williamston Recreation Services Agreement:** This agreement was renewed from 2017 to 2019 for the following sports: flag football, k-3rd grade basketball, baseball, softball and t-ball. Tackle football, cheerleading and 4th -8th grade basketball were removed from the new contract and are now operated by the athletic boosters in Williamston.
8. **Park Ranger Program** continues to be an asset in assisting park users during evening hours and weekends. Park Rangers were on duty from mid-May to mid-September. This program has been very successful in providing positive interaction and assistance to park visitors. The program was first implemented in 2001.
9. **Pavilion Rentals:** 147 reservations (131/2016; 44 Farmers' Market dates; four (4) Crafters' Marketplace dates; one (1) Celebrate Meridian-Independence Day Celebration; 51 CSA produce pick-up dates; four (4) races; four (4) baseball, softball and kickball tournaments.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ON TEAM SPORTS 2017

During the program evaluation process of our team sports participants, we ask how much money they spent participating in the program aside from the registration fee. The amounts were calculated by averaging the responses and multiplying by the number of participants. Examples include equipment, travel, snacks, gate fee, pre-game food/beverage, post-game food/beverage, etc.

• Youth & Adult Pickleball Clinics	26 players @ \$45	\$ 1,170
• Adult Softball Leagues	418 players @ \$268	\$112,024
• Adult Kickball Leagues	352 players @ \$92	\$ 32,284
• Adult Volleyball Leagues	165 players @ \$72	\$ 11,880
• Okemos Youth Flag Football	98 players @ \$73	\$ 7,154
• Okemos Youth Soccer	943 players @ \$63	\$ 59,409
• Youth Baseball/Softball	377 players @ \$75	\$ 28,275
• Haslett Youth Basketball	257 players @ \$70	\$ 17,990
• Haslett Youth Soccer	114 players @ \$60	\$ 6,840
• Haslett Youth T-Ball	77 players @ \$60	\$ 4,620
• Haslett Youth Flag Football	<u>111 players @ \$66</u>	<u>\$ 7,326</u>
Total Players:	2,838 players	\$288,972

Williamston Youth Sports:

• Softball	70 players @ \$125	\$ 8,750
• Baseball	59 players @ \$125	\$ 7,375
• Tee ball	58 players @ \$200	\$ 11,600
• Flag football	69 players @ \$50	\$ 3,450
• Basketball	<u>203 players @ \$200</u>	<u>\$ 40,600</u>
• Total players:	459 players	\$ 71,775

Total Economic Impact:	<u>3,271 players</u>	<u>\$360,747</u>
------------------------	----------------------	------------------

HARRIS NATURE CENTER

The *Harris Nature Center (HNC)* is in its 21st year of operation and sits on the edge of the Red Cedar River in the middle of the 200 acres of Meridian Riverfront Park. The nature building contains live animal exhibits, a library, and a classroom. Praised for its large variety of programs reaching people

of all ages and backgrounds, the *HNC* provides opportunities for residents to connect with nature here in their own community.

Participation in programs and visitorship has increased from 1,064 in July 1997 (inception of the Center) to 18,116 in 2017. These numbers are calculated by visitors per day.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Drop In Visitors	8,038	7,696	6,910	7,541	7,446	7,093
Program Attendance	11,175	11,689	8,746	10,261	10,760	11,023
Total Participation	19,213	19,385	15,656	17,802	18,206	18,116

The *HNC* was open for general public drop-in from 9 am – 4 pm, Monday through Saturday and 12 pm – 4 pm on Sundays. In addition to the 7,093 drop-in visitors, 11,023 people attended classes and programs. Together, a total 18,116 people visited the *HNC* in 2017.

2017 Programs	Number of Programs	Number of Participants
Educational School Programs	202	4,432
Outreach Programs	41	1,904
Nature Camps	60	381
Children's Public Programs	49	472
Adult Public Programs	25	277
General Public Programs	28	512
Winter Wonderland Event	1	200
Halloween Adventures Event	1	975
Building Rentals/Uses	50	1,686

Points of Interest concerning HNC programs:

1. Hosted in *Annie's Big Nature Lesson* (ABNL) which brings school classes out to the nature center for a week long emersion in nature education. Twelve (12) classes participated in ABNL in 2017.
2. Outreach Programs increased a bit as we took nature programs to adult groups such as Senior Centers and Independent Living Homes, and to children in preschool, elementary school and middle school, as well as the *Ingham County Youth Center*.
3. Our annual Halloween Adventures event broke all of its attendance records on a beautiful October day when 975 children and adults attended the event over the course of the day.
4. In celebration of the *HNC 20th Anniversary*, held a *Birthday Bash* event for families, attended by 56 people, and a *Turtle Toast Gala* attended by 82 people and raising \$1430 for the *Harris Nature Center Foundation* projects.
5. Partnered with the *Capital Area Audubon Society* to lead three (3) bird walks during the spring, bringing 15 people into three (3) different parks and preserved areas of the Township.
6. Partnered with *Michigan State University* as part of their annual Science Festival. We offered a free Explore Nature Open House which was attended by 75 people.
7. Partnered with the *Arbor Day Foundation* as part of their annual Arbor Day Celebration at the Potter Park Zoo. We presented a program on Skins and Skulls to 280 school children.
8. Partnered with *Be a Tourist in Your Own Town* which encouraged 102 people to come out and discover the Harris Nature Center.

9. *HNC* staff participated in five (5) local elementary school Science Fairs to promote *HNC* and its programs.

Community Volunteers supported the *Harris Nature Center* in many ways in 2017:

1. There were seven (7) Stewardship Mornings with 44 people volunteering their time to enhance *HNC* and Meridian Riverfront Park with projects such as pulling invasive plants, maintaining gardens, spreading woodchips and trimming trails.
2. David Vanderklok of *Studio [intrigue]* and staff spent weeks building the Beaver Lodge Playhouse feature of the Nature Exploration Area.
 - a. Two (2) work days were held with 22 volunteers harvesting, trimming and moving the saplings for the central portion of the Beaver Lodge.
 - b. Three (3) work events were held for volunteers to cut 775 non-skid pads to go on the glass deck of the Beaver Lodge. Four (4) volunteers from the Okemos Independent Bank, four (4) volunteers from the MSU Campus Lions and members of the Meridian Township Grounds Team and Parks and Recreation Team all contributed their time and cutting prowess.
 - c. The Beaver Lodge Playhouse will be finished in 2018.
3. Nine (9) volunteers upgraded the rock perimeter the Michigan Fossil Dig feature of the Nature Exploration Area with larger boulders.
4. Kaden Bartlett, Boy Scout Troop 96 completed his Eagle Scout project by building a split rail fence around the east and south sides of the Nature Exploration Area.
5. Three (3) retired geologists volunteered their time to locate, secure funding and deliver 15 geologic specimens, creating a new exhibit, the *Boulder Garden*.
6. The *Lansing Oar and Paddle Club* attempted their annual river clearing project in the fall, but was thwarted by high water levels.



7. Dr. Evelyn Cudel continued to maintain the herb garden on the west side of the *HNC* building.
8. Sixteen (16) teens volunteered as Junior Counselors during Summer Nature Camp, contributing 297 volunteer hours.
9. Volunteer instructor Rosemary Buscetta designed and taught *The Magic of Fairy House Building* for 17 participants.
10. Six (6) volunteers from the MSU *Kappa Delta Pi* created the pumpkin piñatas for the Halloween Adventures games area.
11. Four (4) members of the Lansing Derby Vixens volunteered as fire tenders at the Halloween Adventures event.
12. Tom (*Okemos Public Library*) and Carla Shilts volunteered at Halloween Adventures as Sir Read-A-Lot and Lady Read-A-Lot in authentic attire.
13. 75 volunteers helped with *HNC's* major events by baking treats, manning the games area, directing traffic, reading stories, leading crafts, selling tickets, helping visitors with equipment, demonstrating activities, and organizing the refreshment table.
14. Students from the *MSU Department of Community Engagement and Sustainability* designed a Geology Website for *HNC* to make educational information on the Boulder Garden available to the public.

Staff promoted HNC programs through print, radio, television, web site, and social media:

1. HNC programs appeared in various local newspapers over 8 times each month including photographs and newspaper web sites.
2. Staff was interviewed 34 times on radio and television.
3. Maintained the HNC portion of the Township Web Site.
4. Maintained the HNC's Facebook page and Twitter account in order to promote the HNC via social media. HNC finished the year with 1850 fans on Facebook and 670 followers on Twitter.
5. Created four (4) HNC newsletters which were emailed to 1,700 interested people.

Services provided by the Harris Nature Center in 2017:

1. Provided 40 cross-country ski rentals and 17 snowshoe rentals to the public (not including the use of equipment during the Winter Wonderland event).
2. Prepared the All-Terrain Wheelchair for use by one (1) visitor.
3. Promoted recycling at the HNC by providing a bin for water bottles in the building, replacing polystyrene cups with paper cups at all major events, posting the Green Gazette and providing recycling information to HNC visitors.
4. Coordinated an ongoing program to fight invasive plants in the parks with 112 volunteers working over five different days. 36 bags (1,080 pounds) of garlic mustard were removed from Meridian Riverfront Park.
5. Honored 135 groups and individuals for volunteer efforts and support of the HNC at the 2017 Nature Friends Barbecue in June.
6. HNC operations were supported by two (2) full-time Senior Park Naturalists, and four (4) quarter-time Assistant Naturalists, with these programs taught by outside instructors:
 - a. Two (2) photography classes taught by Ron St. Germain.
 - b. One (1) garden class taught by Vern and Sue Stephens.
 - c. One (1) adult class taught by Rosemary Buscetta.
 - d. Three (3) bird watching walks led by Capital Area Audubon Society members
 - e. Two (2) Nordic Walking classes taught by Eric Ederer



Improvements to the Harris Nature Center in 2017:

1. The HNC Foundation (HNCF) began working on the Beaver Lodge feature in the Nature Exploration Area with the architectural drawings and funding for the project provided by David Vanderklok of Studio [intrigue] Architects. It is anticipated that this project will be finished in 2018.
2. The HNCF granted fifteen (15) school bus scholarships, allowing 697 students to participate in educational nature programs at HNC.
3. Developed and implemented the Boulder Garden Exhibit.
4. Developed four (4) new live animal exhibits, including the Honeybee Exhibit and Eastern Screech Owl Exhibit. Also, developed new educational exhibit titled Forest Phantoms: Common Birds We Seldom See.
5. Six (6) people participated in the Adopt an Animal donation program. This program was designed to encourage the public to become more invested in the live animal exhibits and to raise funds to help care for them. \$500 was donated in 2017.

6. Staff received first aid, CPR and active shooter training.

FARMERS' MARKET

Christine Miller completed her tenth year as Market Manager.

The **spring market** was held on Saturdays from 8 am to 2 pm, May 6 to June 24, with a total of 54 vendors.



Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Annual Vendors	25	28	27	35	37	38	37	36	36
Daily Vendors	15	18	18	18	13	13	19	31	18

The **summer market** was held on Saturdays from 8 am to 2 pm and on Wednesdays from 8 am to 2 pm during the months of July through October, with a total of 64 vendors.

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Annual Vendors	29	30	31	38	43	42	40	36	38
Daily Vendors	25	25	26	21	16	19	26	36	26

The **Thanksgiving Market** was held on November 22 especially for fresh turkey pick up. A total of 29 vendors participated in this event.

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of Vendors	14	19	23	29	23	20	25	27	29

In partnership with the *Meridian Mall*, the **Winter Farmers' Market** began on Saturday, December 4, 2010. The Market is held in the *JC Penney Corridor*. The Winter Farmers' Market was held once a month during the 2010/2011 market and increased to two times a month during the 2011/2012 market. The market has accepted SNAP since 2012, and starting 2015 participated in the Double-Up Food Bucks (DUFb) Program as well.

Year	12/2010 to 4/2011	12/2011 to 4/2012	12/2012 to 4/2013	12/2013 to 4/2014	12/2014 to 4/2015	12/2015 to 4/15	12/2016 to 4/16	12/2017 only
Number of Vendors	26	40	27	39	38	48	42	41
Number of Dates	6	10	10	10	10	10	10	2

"Music at the Market" – on 26 Saturdays and 17 Wednesdays.

Weekly E-Newsletter, Twitter posts and Facebook postings for communication with customers began in 2011.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Email addresses	1,100	1,300	1428	1507	1717	1830	2000
Facebook				2217	3107	4384	5172
Instagram followers						77	180

In 2012, the market began accepting the Michigan Bridge Card, Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb), and continued the WIC Project Fresh coupons and Senior Market Fresh coupons. Many of the vendors also began accepting credit card payments at their booths. In 2017, the Bridge Card acceptance and DUFb generated \$11,357 in market business and brought 49 new customers to the Market.



PARKS, GROUNDS AND CEMETERY DIVISION

1. Ended the year with 38 interments and 8 grave sales at Glendale Cemetery.
2. Replaced retaining wall and added new fencing along front of Glendale Cemetery.
3. In 2017, approximately 190 trees were chipped at the Nancy Moore Park location.

4. Work Orders Completed:

- a. 148 - Parks
 - b. 3 - Land Preserves
 - c. 54 - Glendale Cemetery
 - d. 53 - Pedestrian-Bicycle Pathway System
- 258 Total

5. Covered and capped trailhead markers and posts with white vinyl at North Meridian Road Park.
6. Contracted for mosquito control at the Township Hall, Farmers' Market, Historical Village, Nancy Moore Park and Fire Stations. This effort will be continued in 2018.

Much of the yearly activity consists of **routine functions** for the maintenance of the townships' parks and facilities.

1. Mulching flower beds and at base of trees.
2. Ski and Snowshoe Equipment: In December, moved equipment into the *Harris Nature Center* and in March move, equipment back into storage.
3. Installed (and removed) holiday decorations at Township Hall and other Township sites and along Okemos Rd.
4. Snow removal in 30 Township parking areas including township facilities, libraries and parks and along pathways (total 78 miles of pathway).
5. Plowed, shoveled, salted and checked for ice at all Township sites.
6. Christmas Tree Recycling – chipped trees in January.
7. Dumped trash and placed dog waste bags in Township parks (twice a week at all locations).
8. Maintained salt barrels at crosswalks throughout the Township.
9. Hung banners at corner of Marsh and Central Park Drive and over Hamilton Road on a weekly basis.
10. Deer removal from roadway and pathways as needed.

11. Cold patched in Township parking areas.
12. Assisted Building Maintenance crew with repairs.
13. Spring/summer/fall equipment: Bring in from storage, clean, and repair as needed.
14. Winter Equipment: Clean, repair and move into storage.
15. Playground safety inspections
16. Prepare athletic fields by aerating, rolling, seeding, field design and layout, spray fence lines, install and repair soccer equipment, hang nets, install bases, and clean sand volleyball courts, etc.).
17. Prepare 17 park sites for opening after April 1st with general clean up, picnic table inventory and repairs, trash barrel inventory, repairs and ordering, clean and repair grills, open restrooms and make necessary repairs, hang cables in Central Park pavilion for Farmers' Market vendors, install new safety surface material at all play structures.
18. Spring clean-up in both cemeteries.
19. Mow, trim pathways, trails and sidewalks (clean, clear, brush hog, trim bushes and tree limbs, etc.).
20. Township garden areas, Grand River Bus Stop, Transfer Station, Township Hall, Public Safety Building (begin spring cleaning with trimming, removing dead plants and debris, spreading mulch, spray areas for weeds as needed, etc.).
21. *Okemos Library* (assist with annual spring clean-up, deliver and spread mulch, trim and remove brush, limbs and other debris, repair areas as requested).
22. Remove salt barrels from crosswalks throughout the Township and reorder if necessary for end of year.
23. Site preparations for four (4) softball/baseball tournament weekend events in Nancy Moore and Hartrick Parks.
24. Winterize Township Parks: In November, close and winterize restroom facilities, gather and stack picnic tables, remove athletic equipment (goals, bases, nets, etc.).
25. Inventory of sports nets (basketball, soccer, tennis) and repair and/or order new if necessary.
26. Spring/summer/fall equipment: Clean, repair if needed and put into storage.
27. Salt Barrels: Inventory and repair and/or order new if necessary.



SPECIAL EVENT SET UP

Assist with site preparation and cleanup, delivery and installation of equipment, and other work orders as required specific to each event and on occasion and on-hand the day of the event:

1. *HNC* ski classes, Family Winter Sports Weekend; Polar Bear 5K Run/Walk; Moonlight Sledding, Winter Wonderland at *HNC* (January-February)
2. Fishing Derbies (February and June): Clean area and bring extra trash barrels for the events.
3. Three (3) Family Moonlight Sledding events: Inspect the hill, deliver firewood, fire rings, generators, lights, extra barrels, inspect hill.
4. Starlight ski and snowshoe events at *HNC* (cleaned and cleared trail, set up lights).
5. Chinese New Year: site preparation and clean up
6. Recycling Events: two events were held at Chippewa Middle School; area was cleaned; brought extra trash barrels, tables and signage.
7. Wildflower Festival and Native Plant Sale at *HNC*: Cleaned and cleared trail, erected signage, cleaned overflow parking area.

8. *Meridian Garden Club Plant Sale* (May): Cleaned Central Park pavilion and surrounding area; install green tarp walls; arrange picnic tables and their spring and fall garden clean-up events.
9. Memorial Day Ceremony at *Glendale Cemetery* (clear debris, erect fallen headstones, spread mulch around flower bed areas, mow and trim, set up for ceremony).
10. *Fireworks Celebration/Celebrate Meridian*: Erect banners, additional trash and recycle barrels, barricades clean up food truck rally.
11. Elections: Deliver, set up, take down and store equipment for all elections.
12. Halloween Adventures at *HNC* (October): Pick up and return trailer used for hayrides, purchase hay, clean and clear trails, mow area used for pumpkin patch and overflow parking, erect tents and banners, deliver wood to fire pit.
13. *Christmas in the Village* (December): String lights in tree, clean area, clear and salt sidewalks through the Village and from parking areas, extra trash barrels, erect signage. (Event canceled due to severe weather in 2016)
14. Field preparation took place from April through November.
 - a. Youth Baseball
 - b. Adult Softball
 - c. Adult Kickball
 - d. Youth Softball
 - e. Youth Soccer
 - f. Youth Flag Football

Mowing and Trimming: April through November at 43 locations of approximately 215- acres per mow. This activity took place at least once a week and at peak times in some places, twice per week. Mowing and trimming also was conducted along a majority of the bicycle pedestrian pathway.

Parks and Ground Maintenance Staff:

1. Lead Worker in Parks and Grounds Maintenance Division: Matt Foreman. This position leads the work of four full-time Utility Workers and numerous seasonal staff.
2. All Utility Workers attended the following training sessions: CPR; Fork Truck Operator; *MDOT* Traffic Control; Lock Out/Tag Out; Personal Protect; Storm Water Management.

LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Description of the Land Preservation Program

The Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board members are appointed to 4-year terms with a two term limit. The LPAB has the responsibility of advising staff in implementing the land preservation program. The program was developed to preserve lands and waters that provide valuable habitat for native plants and animals, protect air and water quality, add aesthetic value, and enhance public enjoyment of the outdoors. To date, 864.2 acres have been acquired in 22 preserves located throughout the Township. Strong efforts have been made to implement stewardship plans lead by full-time stewardship coordinator Kelsey Dillon. The board held eight (8) regular meetings and conducted three (4) site visits to properties and is staffed by Senior Parks and Land Management Coordinator, Jane Greenway, Stewardship Coordinator Kelsey Dillon.

Notable 2017 Accomplishments

1. Over 250 volunteers donated 600 hours of their time on stewardship activities in the land preserves in 2017.
2. Thirteen land preserves were part of the 2017 Deer Management Program. 80 total deer were harvested from October 1 – January 1 during the regular archery season. The USDA Sharpshooters will return to the parks and land preserves in early 2018 in an effort to curtail the chronic wasting disease.
3. Garlic Mustard was removed in several preserves as part of the Stewardship Network's Garlic Mustard Challenge
4. Treated invasive plants in numerous preserves
5. All 2017 projects in the Towar Woods Land Preserve were funded by a \$5,000 grant that the Towar Community Concerns committee (TC3) received from the Capital Area Community Foundation.

2017 Acquisitions

1. Linn Acquisition – This is a 91 acre property located at Van Atta/Tihart. Purchase price was \$600,000.
2. Serafine Acquisition – This is a 15 acre property located on Mt. Hope, east of Hagadorn. It is adjacent to the Southwest Meridian Uplands Preserve. Purchase price was \$162,500.
3. Mitroka Acquisition – This is a 2 acre property located adjacent to the Towar Woods Preserve The property was donated.

Ongoing Acquisitions

1. Ponderosa – 89 acres located north of Bonanza Drive, south and adjacent to Legg Park. Acquisition Breakdown: Sale Price: \$ 1,225,000; Grant Amount \$ 450,000; Donation from Seller \$ 225,000; Funds from Land Preservation Fund \$ 550,000
2. Mandenberg – 4.5 acres on Hamilton Road, along the Red Cedar River. Agreed purchase price is \$63,000.



3. Green Road – 4+ acre property that is still under review.
4. **Towar Woods** - Efforts continued in restoring a seven-acre portion of the Towar Woods Preserve that was previously filled with invasive shrubs. Work included 5 acres of invasive shrub clearing by a contractor, 150 native hardwood trees planted and herbicide treatment of invasive species across the entire 125 acre preserve.
5. **Davis Foster** - Approximately 100 - 3rd grade students from Haslett participated in a seed ball project at the Davis Foster Land Preserve. The students made seed balls and threw them into a previously burned area to enhance the forbs in the restored grasslands. Continued with controlled burn program – 4 acres burned in April 2017.
6. **SW Meridian Uplands** - A seven-acre in the Southwest Meridian Uplands Preserve was seeded with native forb seed in the second step of a prairie restoration project.

Land Preservation Advisory Board Members

Jon Mayes, Chair

Jim Kielbaso, Vice-Chair & Environmental Commission Liaison

Julie Brixie, Township Board Liaison
Mark Stephens, Park Commission Liaison
Roland Harmes, Resident Member
Margo Smith, Resident Member
Yu Man Lee, Resident Member
Jaimie Hiller, Resident Member

DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Family Fun Guide** – This 62-page brochure markets all divisions of the Parks and Recreation Department including other township news and serves as a snapshot of the culture and quality of life we experience here in our community. A total of 22,000 copies were direct mailed to each address in the Township in January promoting activities throughout the year. This was the second year that the Family Fun Guide became an annual publication verses semi-annual. Numerous local real estate companies also requested copies for their use in marketing our community. The Meridian Monitor was utilized as a reminder for upcoming programs and activities throughout the year.
2. **Prime Meridian Magazine** –During the budget process, it was decided to combine the Parks and Recreation Department “Family Fun Guide” and the “Meridian Monitor” to form the Prime Meridian Magazine. This new publication will be distributed three times per year. The first issue was distributed in December.
3. **ActiveNet On-line Registration** – We began this method of registration in 2007 and it has streamlined processes for registration, class lists, team roster development, communication with participants and promotion of future programs. To date, the Township has **20,758** customers enrolled in *ActiveNet*.

MERIDIAN SENIOR CENTER

The Meridian Senior Center provides for the educational, enrichment and social needs of adults aged 55 and over for all older adults in the Township. This program is a joint effort between Meridian Township and Okemos Public Schools. Cherie Wisdom is the Senior Center Coordinator.

In 2017, 2,617 programs were conducted with 13,485 participants (1,804 were guests). The three most popular programs were:

1. Games (with 4,092 participants)
2. Fitness and exercise (with 3,419 participants)
3. Congregate meal program (with 2,259 participants.)

The Senior Center ended 2017 with 463 members

A total of 33 volunteers contributed a total of 1,525.9 hours



2017 End of Year Report

Program Category	Occurrences	Attendance
Arts	30	165
Clubs	11	110
Coffee/Social	257	564
Community Outreach	8	48
Computer/Tech.	29	118
Congregate Meals	93	2259
Cultural Events	2	0
Education Events	64	466
Fitness/Exercise	408	3419
Focus Group	1	3
Fundraiser	2	150
Games	789	4092
Health Screening	100	594
Information/Resource	496	77
Intergenerational	8	31
Legal Services	10	33
Media	270	661
MEETING	11	52
Special Events	15	426
Off-Site Events	6	10
Tax Assistance	7	207
TOTALS:	2617	13485

MERIDIAN HISTORICAL VILLAGE

The Village, founded and operated by the *Friends of Historic Meridian*, is a living history museum – a place where visitors can experience what life was like over 100 years ago. The seven (7) historical buildings provide a wonderful setting in which to experience life of an early mid-Michigan settler.

Following is a summary of the activities the Village conducted in 2017:

1. The Village office was open Tuesday through Thursday from 9 am to 2 pm (except December-February and July). The office was closed from December 15 - January 31.
2. The Village was open for walk-through tours on Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm from May through October, coinciding with the *Farmers' Market* open hours.
3. Thirty schools toured the Village in 2017 with a total of 2,709 students in grades K through 4. All tours were conducted by one or more of our 20 school docents and two staff members.
4. A week-long morning day camp was held in August with 13 campers (grades 3-6).
5. Twelve board meetings were held with two (2) specifically dedicated to long-range planning. The Annual Membership Meeting was held on Sunday, November 12th, and LuAnn Maisner served as the speaker sharing the master plans for changes to Central Park.

Special events:

1. The Friends participated in the kick-off ceremony for the Townships' 175th anniversary on February 16th.
2. The special events committee set up and hosted quilt displays during the month of March at both the Okemos and Haslett libraries.
3. Be A Tourist In Your Own Town was held on June 3rd with 150-175 visitors and included a Scottish Highlander re-enactment club practicing drills for the public.
4. The Heritage Festival was moved to July 1st to coincide with the Celebrate Meridian event and included two Civil War clubs who camped overnight and "waged a skirmish" the day of the event.
5. The Friends sponsored a walking tour of the old Haslett area on August 20th and of the old Okemos area on September 17th.
6. Halloween in the Village was held on October 28th with over 500 visitors, and tours of two cemeteries were held on October 29th.
7. Christmas in the Village was held on December 10th and attracted between 500 - 750 visitors.



Members/Attendance/Wedding Totals:

1. Total number of *Friends of Historic Meridian* members: 177 (173/2016) (195/2015) (201/2014)
2. Number of wedding rentals in 2017: 13 (6/2016; 8/2015; 11/2014; 22/2013)

Brad Brogren was President of the *Friends of Historic Meridian* Board of Directors. Staff consisted of Executive Director Jane Rose, Education Coordinator Melissa Andresen until June, and Assistant to the Director Holly Cordill beginning in September.

2017 VOLUNTEERS

Living Generously. This is how we best describe the following list of volunteers. It is evident the personal commitment so many of our residents have to making our community special for everyone. The commitment of time, money, and knowledge continues to strengthen the ties between residents, businesses and government making Meridian Township very special place to live.

To honor of all our 2017 park volunteers, a tree will be planted in the Meridian Historical Village with a recognition plaque containing a QR Code linked to our website that lists all the volunteer projects for the year to serve as a lasting memory for all.



Meridian Garden Club—Successfully dedicated the Plant it Pink Garden for Breast Cancer awareness, planted and maintained gardens in the Historical Village, the gardens in front of the Municipal Building and Claire Twohy Memorial Garden in Central Park – Helen Tanner/Founding President, Jodie Szalankiewicz/President

Haslett Beautification Association—Planted and maintained gardens in Haslett green spaces and engaged youth in meaningful beautification projects - Teri Banas/President, Shari Middlewood/Vice President, Chris Decker/Treasurer, Anne Perkins/Secretary; and board members: Patty Cotter, Diane Robinson, Simar Pawar and Peter Menser

Friends of Historic Meridian—Efforts toward growth and sustainability of the Meridian Historical Village and provided meaningful education programs and community events for youth and families – Jane Rose, Executive Director

Meridian Senior Center Advisory Board—Provided input, direction and program support for the Meridian Senior Center - Peggy Frish/President, Jack Whitmeyer/Vice President, Darla Jackson/Secretary, Betsy Bricker, Richard Fox, Gen Healy, Kristen Campbell/Ingham County Care Facility, Matt Prinz/Chippewa Middle School teacher

Harris Nature Center Foundation— Jim Buscetta/President, Nancy Parmenter/Vice President, Barb Kissling/Treasurer, Rachel McDaniel/Secretary, June Hicks, Julie Moore, Martha (Patty) Robbins, Roxanne Truhn, and Nora Thompson

Haslett Kiwanis Club—Participated in two locations for the annual Love A Park Day

Kiwanis Club of Okemos—Solicited giftcards from local businesses for the Harris Nature Center Silent Auction and donated money for a new flagpole at Towner Road Park

Haslett-Okemos Rotary— Sponsored the new interpretive signs in the Historical Village

Helen and Howard Tanner—Honorary directors of the Harris Nature Center Foundation

Red Cedar Kid's 4-H Club—Received training and monitored a vernal pool in a park for the Mid-Michigan monitoring program for a year; Elisabeth Baumann/Teen Leader, Maggie Callender/Member, Greta Gmazel/Member, Harmony Gmazel/Leader and Nature Study co-leader, Becky Callender/Volunteer Leader), Krista Baumann/Volunteer Leader, Jean Fierke/Nature Study co-leader

MSU Global Day of Service—Students and staff from MSU removed the invasive species Autumn Olive at the Davis Foster Land Preserve



Earth Day—Okemos Daisy Scouts and staff from Okemos Goldfish Swim School planted flowers and cleaned up Nancy Moore Park

Love A Park Day—Hillbrook and Orlando Parks – Haslett Kiwanis Club, Meridian Democrats, Bobby Dubyne, Township Board member Phil Deschaine; Harris Nature Center – Okemos Kiwanis Club, Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club, Treasurer Julie Brixie, Meridian Democrats; Hartrick Park – Martha Hentz and Chris Buck with families; Sander Farm – Larry Hennessy; Forest Hills Natural Area – Forest Hills Neighborhood Association; Ferguson Park- Haslett Scout Troop #265 and Lansing Young Professionals Kiwanis Club; Wonch Park- Williamston Girl Scout Troop

Vernal Pool Volunteers—Attended a presentation, training and monitored a vernal pool over the course of 2017: Leslie Kuhn (lead organizer for Ingham county properties), Jim Hewitt, Jeff Potter,



Margo Smith, Elaine Fischhoff, Michael Fields, Cathryn Fields, Jan Derksen, Chris Leodler, John Leodler, Bri Krauss, Nicholas Stevenson, Ken Rosenman, Roger Webster, Becca Blundell, Karrie Korroch, Julie Walker, Joe Walker, Clara Bratton, Abigail King, Steve Hensel, Marion Gorton, Ralph Gorton, Ellen Link, Julia O'Connor, Jacqueline Stewart, Aaron Davis, Richard Baker, Hannah Lundin, Katie Gorman, Cindy Drier, Samantha Courtney, John Cox, Emma Jakobcic, Pat Witte, Tim Buckley, Travis Coon, Sara Huettelman, Chelsea Taylor, Rachelle Roake, Wendy Koerner, Jacqueline Stewart, Therese Nugent, Julie Hupp, Amy O'Brien, Michael Sanders, Mary

Hennessey, Katherine Neils, Eckhart Dersch, Jean Fierke, Corey Lucas, Julia O'Connor, Deborah Harris, and the Red Cedar Kid's 4-H Club

Eckhart Dersch—Provided reports on parks throughout the Township identifying maintenance needs

Larry Hennessey—Cleaned and monitored the bluebird boxes in Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area and Tacoma Hills Natural Area

Georganne Withey—Fitness Over-50 Program Coordinator at the Meridian Mall

Kelly Colflesh—Assisted with annual Meridian Fishing event



Leslie Kuhn and Jim Hewitt—Treated invasive Phragmites and Japanese Knotweed across the Township; Mapping, permitting, owner contact and treatments. Mid-Michigan coordinators of the Stewardship Network.

Dave Reicosky and Julie Taliber—Helped with the planting and continued maintenance the Monarch Garden at Hartrick Park

Ellen Passage and Mary Ann Peterson—Cleaned and maintained the Paul Peterson Memorial at Nancy Moore Park

Lansing Oar and Paddle Club—Continued stewardship of the Red Cedar River

Steve Thomas & Sower Woods Neighbors—Regularly maintained Sower Woods Land Preserve by removing invasive species and planting native forbs

Frank Hatfield & Sylvan Glen Neighbors—Removed invasive Autumn Olive from Red Cedar Glen Land Preserve

Gene Wasserman—Maintenance, monitoring and reporting of Bluebird boxes in Meridian Riverfront Park and Hartrick Park

Kaden Bartlett—Completed his Eagle Scout project by building a split rail fence around the east and south sides of the Nature Exploration Area at the Harris nature Center (Boy Scout Troop 96)

Steve Wilson, Ron Elowski, Bob Reszck- Raised funds and organized the Boulder Garden Exhibit

Studio [intrigue] Architects—David Vanderklok, Anna Breithaupt, Mackenzie Parsons - Raised funds, designed and built Beaver Lodge Playhouse

Capital Area Audubon Association - Clara Bratton and Bruce Cohen volunteered as leaders for bird walks

Rosemary Buscetta—Volunteer instructor, prepared and taught the *Magic of Fairy House Building* event

Gerry and Gaelen McNamara- Long time generous donors and supporters of the Harris Nature Center

Steve DeBrabander—Cleared and maintained trail at Brattin Woods Park

Robert and Nancy Smith—Trails and pathways trash removal in Central Park

Towar Woods Preserve: Cleared invasive plants, planted 175 trees, conducted activities to reduce deer damage to trees and cleaned up trash: Dave Caszatt, Donald Dickman, Nick Sanchez, Sandy Davis, Bobbie Davis, Cathie and Max Lindquist, Dave Wearsch, Jim Kielbaso, Margo Smith, Rick Loftus, Matt and Leah Jones with three kids, Mary, Maria & Adriana Flores, Mary Fielding, Mark and Paula Frantz with two sons, Shelby Schueller, Tom and David W., Andy Tobias with daughter, and Tammy Black

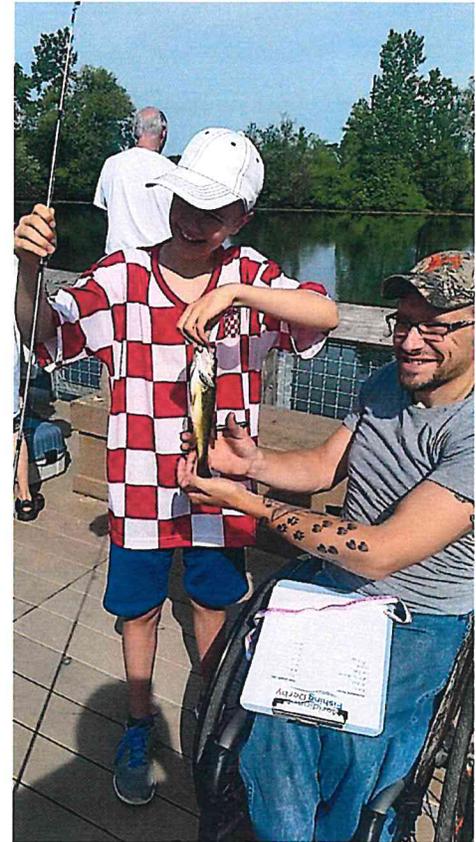
Haslett Boy Scout Troop 265—Scouts and parents planted native white oak trees at the Northridge Land Preserve; members participated in Love A Park Day; members ran the bike valet at the Celebrate meridian event

Bennett Woods Elementary School—90 first grade students extended the certified Monarch garden at Hartrick Park by adding new forbs

Chippewa Middle School—Hartrick Park: students grew flowers in their greenhouse and donated them to be planted in the Monarch garden

Murphy Elementary School—Davis Foster Seed Ball Project: 90 fifth grade students enhanced the grassland at Davis Foster by creating native seed balls; Lake Lansing North tree planting: students planted 32 native hardwood trees on Arbor Day

Brian Van Order (Michigan Demolition and Excavation, Inc.) —Contributions of time, expertise, equipment for many park projects including the boulder project at the Harris Nature Center



Joe Pennoni (Rapid Tree Removal)—Contributions of time, expertise, equipment for many park projects

Outdoor Expressions—Staff and their families helped with the annual Arbor Day tree planting; went above and beyond on work in land preserve

2017 Deer Management Program—80 deer were harvested in the annual program; participating hunters: Michael Meade, Robert Pairolero, Peter Glendinning, Jeremy Kapalla, Scott McDonald, Cam Haskins, Billy Haskins, Austin Nelson, Trevor Arnold, Lee Colony, Samer Naser, Scott Vercruysse, Ray Nachreiner, Mike Ellis, Matthew Delong, Margaret Delong, Martin Shoenmaker, Chad Houck, Justin Cook, Ben Cummings, Thomas Porter, Robert Alexander, Matt Prinz, TJ Flagg, Scott Davis, Donald Floyd, Brent Raymond, Don Cuson, Ken Phinney, Brain Weir, Dan Smith, Gabe Griffith, Tom Cannon, Ryan Holem, Andreas Quintas, Thomas Forton, Chris Heathcock, Matthew Addy, Jon Mayes, Ryan Brzak, Larry Harb, Kim Emery, Chad Stewart, Branden VanLancker, Sean McKinley, Steve Davich, Christopher Wilcox, Kenton Sweckard , Alan Franklin, Dan Pekrul, Neil Ambinder, Conlan Adams, Ken Plaga, Andrew Taylor, Tom Taylor, Jacob Taylor, Dwight Cook , Kevin Thatcher, Charlie Otlewski, Robert Fortino, Chad Stemen, Kenneth Thompson, Derek Proulx, Jeff Speer, Stephen Moore, Tim Buckley, and Matt Wesener

2017 PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER TOTALS

	<u>VOLUNTEERS</u>	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>VALUE</u> <u>(@\$24.14/hr)</u>
Parks/Land Preserves	462	5,529	\$133,470
Recreation	435	19,362	\$467,398
Harris Nature Center	135	1,225	\$29,572
Meridian Historical Village	72	1,625	\$39,228
Meridian Senior Center	33	1,526	\$36,838
Deer Management Program	80	3,250	\$78,455
2017 TOTALS	1,217	32,517	\$784,646



COMMUNITY OF PARTNERS

The Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department makes it a priority to engage local businesses and organizations in its daily operations. Our goal is to create win-win opportunities with these partnerships to increase their exposure and customer engagement as well as assist us in the delivery of quality programs and special events for the community. Below is a list of community partners:

- *A Perfect Ten Nails & Spa*
- *Art Unlimited*
- *Arbor Day Foundation*
- *Bath Township*
- *Blue Gill Grill*
- *BRD Printing*
- *Capellini Salon*
- *Capital Area Audubon Society*
- *Capital Region Community Foundation*
- *City Limits East Bowling Center*
- *Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)*

- *Consumers Energy*
- *Courtesy Ford Okemos*
- *Culver's of Okemos*
- *Dean Transportation*
- *Delta Dental of Michigan*
- *Dick's Sporting Goods*
- *Douglas J Salon & Spa*
- *Eastside Soccer Club*
- *Eastside Tax and Accounting*
- *East Lansing Department of Parks, Recreation and Arts*
- *Edgewood Village Town Homes and Apartments*
- *Ellison Brewery and Spirits*
- *Embassy Transportation LLC*
- *The Eyde Company – George Eyde Family*
- *Fahey, Schultz, Burzych, Rhodes, PLC*
- *Friends of Historic Meridian*
- *Friends of Meridian Pathways*
- *Friends of the Red Cedar River*
- *Goldfish Swim School Okemos*
- *Graff Chevrolet Okemos*
- *Greater Lansing Chinese Association*
- *Greg Darrow & Sons @Water Hauling*
- *The Harkness Law Firm PLLC*
- *Harris Nature Center Foundation*
- *Haslett Beautification Association*
- *Haslett Community Education*
- *Haslett/Okemos Kiwanis Club*
- *Haslett/Okemos Rotary Club*
- *Haslett Schools*
- *Haslett Youth Baseball Association*
- *Heat N Sweep*
- *The Home Depot*
- *HOMTV*
- *Independent Bank of Okemos*
- *Ingham County Parks*
- *Ingham County Medical Care and Rehab Facility*
- *Lansing Oar and Paddle Club*
- *Lansing Derby Vixens*
- *Lansing Parks and Recreation Department*
- *McKearney Asphalt*
- *Meridian Area Business Association*
- *Meijer*
- *Meridian Mall*
- *Meridian Plumbing*
- *Meridian Economic Development Corporation*
- *Meridian Township Police, Fire and Public Works Departments*
- *Meridian Township Citizens' Recycling Advisory Committee*
- *Meridian Sun Golf Club*
- *Meridian Garden Club*
- *Michigan Athletic Club*
- *Michigan Demolition and Excavation*
- *Michigan Department of Natural Resources*
- *Michigan Native Association (MNA)*
- *Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI)*
- *Michigan Plumbing*
- *Michigan Recreation and Park Association*
- *Michigan State University*
 - *Department of Community Engagement and Sustainability*
 - *Grand Learning Network*
 - *Project Fish*
 - *Department of Asian Studies*
 - *Chinese Student Committee*
 - *Chinese Faculty Club*
 - *Chinese Students Scholars Association*
 - *Chinese School*
 - *Chinese Undergraduate Students Association*
 - *Confucius Institute*
 - *Office for International Students and Scholars*
 - *Science Festival*
 - *Tourism and Recreation Club*
 - *Kappa Delta Pi Fraternity*
- *Mid-Michigan Stewardship Network*
- *Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council*
- *Mosquito Squad*
- *MSU Demmer Center*
- *MSU Federal Credit Union*
- *Playmakers*
- *Nokomis Learning Center*
- *Okemos Ace Hardware*
- *Okemos Animal Hospital*
- *Okemos Auto Collection*
- *Okemos Community Education*
- *Okemos Marathon*
- *Okemos Public Schools*
- *Okemos Baseball Club*

- *Okemos Soccer Club*
- *Okemos and Haslett Libraries*
- *Okemos and Haslett Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts*
- *Okemos Masons*
- *Pruess Pets*
- *Ralya Elementary School*
- *Riverside Cat Hospital*
- *Russell Builders, Inc.*
- *Dr. Maureen Sander*
- *Schupan Recycling*
- *St. Luke Lutheran Church*
- *Studio [intrigue] Architects*
- *Studio C*
- *Supreme Sanitation*
- *Taiwanese Association of Greater Lansing*
- *Tom's Food Center*
- *Towar Community Concerns Committee (TC3)*
- *City of Williamston*
- *WLNZ Radio/TV*
- *Whole Foods Market of East Lansing*
- *Wood's Marathon*

PERSONNEL

LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation
Robin Faust, Administrative Assistant II
Michael Devlin, Parks and Recreation Specialist
Darcie Weigand, Parks and Recreation Specialist
Katherine (Kit) Rich, Senior Park Naturalist/HNC Coordinator
Catherine (Kati) Adams, Senior Park Naturalist
Jane Greenway, Senior Parks and Land Management Coordinator
Kelsey Dillon, Park Naturalist/Stewardship Coordinator
Dennis Antone, Facilities Superintendent
Matt Foreman, Parks & Grounds Maintenance Lead Worker
Keith Hewitt, Parks and Grounds Maintenance Utility Worker
Benjamin McCann, Utility Worker
Ryan Moore, Utility Worker (Jan-June)
Michael (Jessie) Hanson, Utility Worker (Jan-Aug)
Derrick Bobb (July-Aug)
Don Cuson
Joshua Cannon
Cherie Wisdom, Meridian Senior Center Coordinator
Courtney Caltribe, Meridian Senior Center Assistant
Christine Miller-Farmers' Market Manager

Seasonal Staff:

- Jill Gasche (May-August)
- Nicklaus Wing (June-December)

Parks and Grounds Seasonal Staff (May - December):

- Tobias Bepler
- Brendan Binge
- Derm Carkson
- Andrew-Joseph Howaniec
- Zachary Reid
- Grant Montague (June-Aug)

Park Ranger (May - September)

- Reece Watrich

Assistant Park Naturalists:

- Allison Goodman- Jan-Dec, 2017
- Rachel McDaniel- Jan-Dec, 2017
- Alicia Olsen- Jan-Dec, 2017
- Sierra McWilliams- Jan-Oct, 2017
- Sarah Randall- April-Aug, 2017
- Kira Ferguson- May-Aug, 2017
- Jamie Andrews- Oct-Dec, 2017

Fitness Over-50 Program Fitness Instructors:

- Molly Hunsberger-Nevis
- Leah Traciak (Sept-Dec)

PARKS AND RECREATION



TOWNER ROAD PARK RIBBON CUTTING
SEPTEMBER 2018

In 2018, the Parks and Recreation Department continued their dedication to make Meridian Township a more vital and vibrant place to live through programs, special events, and development, protection, and management of publicly-owned parks, grounds and natural areas. This was accomplished through the dedicated efforts of the Park Commission, Land Preservation Advisory Board, a professional and enthusiastic staff of 15 full-time parks and recreation employees, numerous part-time and seasonal staff, and many passionate volunteers from the community working in concert to manage 910 acres of parkland, 76 miles of pedestrian/bicycle pathway, 20 miles of nature trails, the Harris Nature Center, Snell-Towar Recreation Center, Meridian Senior Center, year-around Farmers' Market, Meridian Historical Village, 85 acres of Township grounds, 968-acres of land preserves, two (2) cemeteries, and a wide variety of community recreation programs, special events and senior activities.

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP'S PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING DIVISIONS

- **Parks** - .6667 mill (2014-2025) Park Millage, General Fund, fees and charges, grants, volunteer support, donations
- **Recreation** - 1/3 of 1/10th mill Community Services Millage (2012-2021), General Fund, fees and charges, volunteer support and donations
- **Land Preservation** - .33 mill Land Preservation Millage (2010-2019), volunteers
- **Meridian Senior Center** - .133 mill Community Services Millage (2012-2021), Okemos Public Schools, fees and charges, and volunteers

- **Meridian Historical Village** – Managed by the volunteer non-profit organization Friends of Historic Meridian and is funded through grants, donations, fees and charges, and a small General Fund contribution
- **Farmers' Market** – Vendor Fees (self-sustaining)
- **Harris Nature Center** – Park Millage, fees and charges.
- **Snell-Towar Recreation Center** – General Fund, donations, and grants
- **Deer Management Program** – Park Millage, Land Preservation Millage, and General Fund
- **Cemeteries** – Fees and charges, General Fund
- **Pedestrian Bicycle Pathway Millage** - .33 Mills (2016-2027), grants

2018 DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Engineer and bid new footbridge and bathroom building project in Meridian Historical Village and the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector Project through Central Park

The Park Commission approved a master plan for Central Park in 2014 and construction of these projects will start the implementation process of that plan. Grant assistance was sought and awarded for these three projects from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Project agreements were executed in May with the DNR and Wolverine Engineering and Surveyors were hired to provide design and engineering services for both projects. Surveys and wetland reports were completed, as well as, new sewer plans created for the Historical Village. Preliminary plans were reviewed by the Park Commission in December before being submitted to the DNR for approval. Construction is slated for 2019.

Construct Dog Park in Nancy Moore Park and Central Park South

Two sites have been identified as locations for fenced off-leash areas for small and large dogs. The Small Dog Park will be located in Nancy Moore Park. The entry area has been paved and park fenced for opening in 2019. The Dog Park for large dogs(30lbs+) will be constructed in Central Park South in 2019 in conjunction with the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector Project. Additional parking is being added in Central Park South in the spring.

Engineer and Construct Phase I of Marketplace on the Green at Meridian Mall

The concept of a public/private partnership with Meridian Mall was widely accepted, but details to this project have been many. A property trade agreement with Milmar Mall, LLC for 2.43-acres along Central Park Drive will be executed along with a cross-access agreement with CBL Properties for use of their parking lot will be executed in early 2019. Funding for the project has been secured with \$980,000 from sources including non-profits, foundations, donations and Township funds. Fundraising efforts continued into early 2019 in coordination with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Patronicity to raise an additional \$100,000. Design and engineering for the project is underway for the entire project with plans to bid the work in early 2019 and construct in 2019. A groundbreaking ceremony will be planned in early 2019.

Complete Construction of Towner Road Park

Towner Road Park construction was completed in 2018 with amenities including two full-size soccer/lacrosse fields, two ball diamonds, six pickleball courts, 1/3 mile paved looped walking trail, restroom, pavilion and parking lot. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in September in conjunction with the Will Goodale Memorial Kickball Tournament. Organized play on the athletic fields will begin in the spring of 2019.

Expand Parking Lot at North Meridian Road Park

The current parking lot is insufficient for usage especially on soccer weekends. Plans were finalized with the Engineering Department. The paving project was awarded this fall for paving in early spring of 2019.

Pave Eastgate Park Parking Lot

In the past, the dirt parking lot at Eastgate Park on Meridian Road has had to be closed during the wettest times of the year due to muddy conditions and potholes. This summer the lot was paved which will now allow for year-around use of the park and trails in Meridian Riverfront Park.

Complete Design and Installation of Trailhead and Directional Signage in Parks

The goal of this project was to make our parks more welcoming, informative and easier to navigate to increase park usage. All the parks' trails were GPS marked, uploaded to a Google-based smartphone app called "All Trails", new trailhead and directional signs were designed and installed, and new paper maps created, all following the Townships' new brand standards. A total of ten parks were completed in 2018. Another twelve signs are on order for delivery by the end of the year and the remaining two signs are in the design phase. The remaining signs are scheduled for installation in 2019.

Purchase and Install New Park Signs Utilizing New Township Logo

This activity was moved to 2019 to design new signs for parks incorporating new Township Brand Standards. A replacement program will be implemented based on the condition of existing signs over the next few years.

Construct Patio/Courtyard Improvements at the Meridian Senior Center

The Meridian Senior Center located at Chippewa Middle School in Okemos, is funded in part by a Township-wide millage and also by Okemos Public Schools. A small outdoor patio and grassy courtyard exist at the Center but has historically been under-utilized. Plans for the area include a small paved loop pathway, ornamental trees, raised garden containers, benches, retractable awning, and outdoor seating. Planning and implementation for this project has been collaborative with Okemos Schools, the Senior Center Advisory Board, and Township staff. The trees have been planted and the paved path project was awarded for completion in the spring of 2019. The awning will be installed in the spring together with new site furnishings with a ribbon cutting planned for summer of 2019.

Successfully plan and implement the 2018 Celebrate Meridian event as well as other special events throughout the year

The Celebrate Meridian Festival occurred on June 30, 2018 this year in extreme heat, but was still a very successful event. A total of twelve special events were conducted this year with a total of over 18,000 participants.

Continue Implementation of the Deer Management Program (8th year)

A total of 79 volunteer hunters participated in the 2018 Deer Management Program on 39 properties beginning on October 1-January 1. A total of 57 deer were harvested during the 2018 program.

Continue Implementation of Recreation Programs for Youth, Adults and Seniors

Providing recreation services to our residents creates a connection with government, other participants as well as to our community. Programs were offered for persons of all ages and abilities including exercise and enrichment programs for seniors, environmental education classes and team sports for adults and youth, as well as, our ever-popular Sporties for Shorties. "Coach Mike" sure

knows how to engage the pre-kindergarten crowd! Over 8,000 people participated in recreation programs in 2018.

Investigate New Software and Web-Based Options to Improve Cemetery Services

In collaboration with the Clerk’s Office and IT Department, we researched companies to provide improved recordkeeping and an online interface. Firms made presentations and bids were received. Pontem Software is the company that staff recommends as their service provider for Cemetery Records Management.

PARK COMMISSION

The Meridian Township Park Commissioners are elected to 4-year terms and have the responsibility of setting policy and direction for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks. In 2017, they held nine (9) regular meetings, one (1) special meeting, one (1) joint meeting with the Township Board and other Township Boards and Commissions and one (1) joint meeting with the Land Preservation Board.

Mark Stephens was re-appointed as the Park Commission’s representative to the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

PARK COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Michael McDonald, Chair
- Amanda Lick, Vice Chair
- Mark Stephens
- Annika Brixie Schaetzel
- Richard Baker (resigned March 2017)
- Courtney Wisinski (appointed June 2017)

LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Description of the Land Preservation Program

The Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board members are appointed to 4-year terms with a two term limit. The LPAB has the responsibility of advising staff in implementing the land preservation program. The program was developed to preserve lands and waters that provide valuable habitat for native plants and animals, protect air and water quality, add aesthetic value, and enhance public enjoyment of the outdoors. To date, 968 acres have been acquired in 22 preserves located throughout the Township. Strong efforts have been made to implement stewardship plans lead by full-time stewardship coordinator Kelsey Dillon. The Board held eight (8) regular meetings, and conducted four (4) site visits to properties and is staffed by Senior Parks and Land Management Coordinator, Jane Greenway and Stewardship Coordinator Kelsey Dillon.

Highlights:

- New Acquisitions for 2018
 - Ponderosa Preserve 89 acres
 - Nemoke Preserve 14 acres
 - Mandenberg Preserve – 4.7 acres
- 4 new Land Preserve signs installed on recent acquisitions
- Boundary marker Posts installed in five preserves
- 12 restoration projects were completed in 7 preserves

TEAM MEMBERS

LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation
Robin Faust, Administrative Assistant II
Michael Devlin, Parks and Recreation Specialist
Darcie Weigand, Parks and Recreation Specialist
Katherine (Kit) Rich, Senior Park Naturalist/HNC Coordinator
Catherine (Kati) Adams, Senior Park Naturalist
Jane Greenway, Senior Parks and Land Management Coordinator
Kelsey Dillon, Park Naturalist/Stewardship Coordinator
Dennis Antone, Facilities Superintendent
Matt Foreman, Parks & Grounds Maintenance Lead Worker
Keith Hewitt, Utility Worker
Benjamin McCann, Utility Worker
Larry Bobb, Utility Worker
Don Cuson, Utility Worker
Joshua Cannon, Utility Worker
Cherie Wisdom, Meridian Senior Center Coordinator
Courtney Caltrider, Meridian Senior Center Assistant
Corey Patrick-Farmers' Market Manager

Seasonal Staff: Interns

Delaney Bennett
Corey Patrick
Brittany Warrick

Parks and Grounds Seasonal Staff (May – Sept):

- Tobias Bepler
- Brendan Binge
- Derm Carkin
- Andrew-Joseph Howaniec
- Grant Montague (June-Aug)
- Jack Rosenbrook

Park Ranger (May – September):

- Reece Watrich

Assistant Park Naturalists:

- Allison Goodman (Jan-Dec 2018)
- Rachel McDaniel (Jan-Dec 2018)
- Alicia Olsen (Jan-Dec 2018)
- Kira Ferguson (May-Oct 2018)
- Jamie Andrews (Jan-Dec 2018)
- Audra Francis –(May – Dec 2018
- Jacey Jackard – (April – Dec 2018

Fitness Over-50 Program Fitness Instructors:

- Molly Hunsberger-Nevins
- Leah Traciak (September-December)

Department of Parks and Recreation

We put the “P” and “R” in PRIME! In 2019, the Parks and Recreation Department continued their dedication to keep Meridian Township a vital and vibrant place to live through programs, special events, and management of publicly owned parks and natural areas.

This was accomplished through the dedicated efforts of the Park Commission, Land Preservation Advisory Board, a professional and enthusiastic staff of 15 full-time parks and recreation employees, numerous part-time and seasonal staff, and many passionate volunteers from the community. These individuals worked in concert to manage 955 acres of parkland, 76 miles of pedestrian/bicycle pathway, 20 miles of nature trails, the Harris Nature Center, Snell-Towar Recreation Center, Meridian Senior Center, year-around Farmers' Market, Meridian Historical Village, 968-acres of land preserves, and a wide variety of community recreation programs, special events and senior activities.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Marketplace on the Green

This year the project was awarded to Gordon Construction Services for the site work and restroom/office facility. The pavilion portion was awarded to Mid-States Recreation/Coverworx. This facility, when completed will contain a large pavilion, music stage, playground, patio area, rain gardens, and open green space and will become our premier community event location as well as the new home for the Meridian Township Farmers Market. Construction will begin in January 2020 with completion in late spring.

Harris Nature Center Pavilion and Restroom Project

The Harris Nature Center has proven to be a popular destination in our community for environmental education and accessible walks in the woods. Thanks to state and federal grants, a new waterless restroom building and picnic pavilion will enhance the usage of this township gem. The contract for construction was awarded in December 2019 with construction in spring of 2020.

Central Park Grant Projects: Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector and Gateway Walkway and Restroom in Historical Village

This is another example of leveraging local Park Millage funds as grants were received from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund for these two projects. Bids for construction were received and rejected in 2019 due to higher- than- anticipated costs. Time was spent reviewing and reworking the plans and was re-bid in late December. Proposals are due in at the end of January 2020. Construction will begin in the spring of 2020.

DOGS –DOGS-DOGS!

Small dogs in our community are very “yappy” (happy) with the new Small Dog Park that opened in 2019 in Nancy Moore Park. This fenced facility contains a welcoming area with a drinking fountain for pets and owners, dog washing station and benches. The control gate regulates use on a registration basis. Inside the fenced area is green grass, trees and fun agility equipment. Much of the installation work was done in-house by the Parks Maintenance staff. A total of 172 dogs are registered to utilize the park. Two special events took place there this year including a Howl-o-ween Costume Party and a Holiday Hounds party that included pictures with Santa!

Large Dogs have been patiently waiting for their new park. Their site in Central Park South was cleared of dead trees, graded and seeded in preparation for completion in the spring of 2020. This project will be completed in concert with the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector Project.

Senior Center Outdoor Improvements Senior Center Outdoor Improvements

Operation of the Meridian Senior Center is a joint collaboration between the Okemos School District and Meridian Township. With a current membership of 510, the Senior Center is an important facility for enrichment, socialization and fitness for our older adults. New to the Center, this year was the development of an outdoor courtyard space including a paved loop trail. The new courtyard contains multiple pieces of outdoor furniture, landscaping and raised plant beds. A ribbon-cutting event was held with school and township officials present in October.

New Fence at Riverside Cemetery

The fencing in Riverside Cemetery had deteriorated to the point that repair was no longer an option. Therefore, new black aluminum fencing was installed this summer that closely replicates the wrought iron that existed there previously. Some portions of the old fence were saved for a future amenity in the Historical Village.

Parkland Additions

Nearly 45-acres of parkland were added to the park system in 2019. A big THANK YOU to the following donors:

- T.J Acquisitions, LLC donated 9-acres adjacent to Hillbrook Park in Haslett.
- Marilyn Pinnavaia Trust donated a 2-acre parcel adjacent to Brattin Woods Park in the Sleepy Hollow neighborhood.
- Dr. Maureen Sander donated a 31-9 acre parcel on Dobie Road named the Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area.
- In preparation for development of Marketplace on the Green, Meridian Township acquired 2.5 acres of green space on Central Park Drive as part of a land transfer agreement with CBL Properties/Meridian Mall.

New Trailhead and Directional Signage in Parks

This project began in 2018 and continued throughout 2019 of adding new trailhead and directional signage in multiple parks with the goal of making our parks more welcoming, informative and easier to navigate. All 20 miles of park trails were GPS marked and uploaded to a Google-based smartphone app called "All Trails". The remaining 15 parks will receive new signs in 2020.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Recreation Programs for Youth, Adults and Seniors

Providing recreation services to our residents creates a positive connection with government, other participants, as well as to our community. Programs were offered for persons of all ages and abilities including exercise and enrichment programs for seniors, environmental education classes and team sports for adults and youth, as well as our ever-popular Sporties for Shorties.

A. Okemos

1. K-6th Spring Season/556; Fall Season/423; Total = 979
2. K-7th Grade Flag Football Program: 120
3. T-Ball-8th Grade Baseball Programs: 109
4. 1st-8th Grade Softball Program: 106

B. Haslett

1. K-6th Grade Spring Soccer/247; Fall Season/247; Total = 553

2. K-6th Grade Basketball Program: 268
 3. K-7th Flag Football Program: 140
 4. 1st-5th Softball Program: 43
 5. 1st-8th Grade Baseball Program: 98
 6. T-Ball Program: 42
- C. Sporties for Shorties: 380 (4-6 year olds)
 - D. Adult Kickball Leagues (Summer & Fall): 14 teams
 - E. Adult Softball Leagues (Summer): 21 teams
 - F. 4 on 4 Sand Volleyball Leagues (Summer & Fall): 25 teams
 - G. 139 registered Seniors participated in exercise class at Meridian Mall M,W,F year around.

Special Events

Conducting special events engages a wide cross-section of community members with multiple areas of interest. Some of the larger events include:

- Love a Park- over 100 volunteers and service group members spruced-up nine park areas with flowers, mulch, trail building, playground surfacing maintenance
- Senior Health and Fitness Day – this event was held in Wonch Park and included vendor booths, demonstrations, dancing and food and was attended by 62 seniors.
- Halloween Adventures at Harris Nature Center – record setting attendance with 1,475
- Christmas in the Village in the Historical Village – Hosted by the Friends of Historic Meridian
- Blue and Grey Civil War Reenactment in the Historical Village –Hosted by the Friends of Historic Meridian
- Chinese New Year Celebration – this event is conducted at Meridian Mall each year and serves as an cultural education experience with a wide variety of entertainment.
- CELEBRATE MERIDIAN FESTIVAL This event was the major event of the year that included the farmers market, arts and crafts fair, pet adoption, inflatable obstacle course and children’s games, dunk tank, live music, car show, Historical Village tours, food trucks, beer and wine garden and FIREWORKS! It was great event with approximately 20,000 people in attendance.

Harris Nature Center

The Harris Nature Center continues to be one of the top gems of our park system by educating and engaging a large number of youth in environmental education and programs. Notable stats include:

- A. Adopt-an-Animal donations totaled \$625 for 8 animals
- B. Hosted 7 weeks of Annie’s Big Nature Lesson exposing 290 students to a weeklong of learning in an outdoor classroom
- C. 8,439 drop-in visitors
- D. 8,634 program participants (this includes ALL programs including school groups)
- E. Halloween Adventures had a record year with 1,475 participants
- F. Summer Camp had a record year with 440 participants
- G. Kicked off Music in Nature with 3 dates and had 225 attendees
- H. Welcomed a new American Crow to our education programs
- I. Designed and installed new interpretive signs at the Boulder Garden
- J. HNC is the only nature center in the Great Lansing Area with Live Animals. Harris is home to 24 animals including several species of reptiles, amphibians and birds.
- K. Welcomed Allison Goodman to our staff full-time!
- L. Upgraded rooms at HNC to create new, much needed, classroom space

Pavilion Rentals

In 2019, the Township rented pavilions at the following parks: Wonch, Central Park, North Meridian Road Park, Hartrick Park, Nancy Moore Park and Towner Road Park.

	Total Days
Pavilion Rentals	161
3 Special Events (7 days)& 4 - 5K Races (4 days)	11
Weddings	6
7 Tournaments	27
Cricket	12
Total Reservation Days	217

Meridian Township Farmers Market

The Meridian Township Farmers Market continues to be a valuable community resource and social gathering opportunity. New this year was the time change on Wednesdays from 8am-2pm to 3pm to 7pm. This change welcomed new vendors and food trucks and better accommodated after-work customers.

- The Spring and Summer Markets had a combined total of 85 unique vendors – 58 of whom were seasonal and 27 daily vendors.
- Winter (Dec-April) 10 dates 10am-2pm inside Meridian Mall - The Winter Market hosted 42 vendors

The Market once again participated in State and Federal Food Assistance programs including SNAP, Double-Up Food Bucks, Senior Project Fresh and WIC. A total of \$12,350 of assistance money was redeemed at our market in 2019.

During the last five weeks of the outdoor season, we collected produce donations from our vendors and forwarded them to the Haslett Food Pantry at Haslett Community Church. This donation served 127 different households (240 adults/156 children).

Meridian Senior Center

The Meridian Senior Center, located at Chippewa Middle School, provides for the educational, enrichment and social needs of adults aged 55 and over for all older adults in the Township. This program is a joint effort between Meridian Township and Okemos Public Schools.

In 2019, 2,552 programs were conducted with member attendance at 25,050 and non-member attendance at 1,283. The three most popular programs were:

1. Games (with 2,948 participants)
2. Fitness and exercise (with 3,619 participants)
3. Congregate meal program (with 15,743 participants.)

The Senior Center ended 2019 with 503 members (82 new members) and had 35 volunteers. A new addition to the center was the outdoor patio area that now expands available use and opportunity for new programs. The Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club funded much-needed upgrades and landscaping to the front sign.

Deer Management Program (9th year)

The Deer Management Program utilized local archery hunters to assist with managing the white tailed deer over-population in Meridian Township by participating in this highly managed cull program. All participants were background screened, participated in an

orientation and proficiency test, and then assigned to a specific location to hunt. In addition to the 80 deer that were culled through the program in 2019, Township maintenance staff picked up 88 additional dead deer along Township roadways.

Deer Management Program Statistics

(Collision based on data provided on the MSP "Traffic Crash Reporting System – Crash Statistics Report Selection Criteria")

	Total Hunters	Properties Hunted	Deer Harvested	Reported Deer/Car Collisions
2011	25	7	43	152
2012	50	18	90	153
2013	60	20	127	180
2014	73	21	150	137
2015	30	19	63	144
2016	73	31	73	164
2017	66	30	80	129
2018	74	38	57	129
2019	85	38	80	Available 2/20

PARK COMMISSION

The Meridian Township Park Commissioners are elected to 4-year terms and have the responsibility of setting policy and direction for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks. In 2019, they held 11 regular meetings. Mark Stephens was reappointed as the Park Commission's representative to the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

Park Commissioners

- Michael McDonald, Chair
- Amanda Lick, Vice Chair
- Mark Stephens
- Annika Schaetzel (resigned 11/2019)
- Courtney Wisinski (appointed to Township Board 1/2019)
- Ami Van Antwerp (appointed 2/2019)

LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board members are appointed to 4-year terms with a two term limit. The LPAB has the responsibility of advising staff in implementing the land preservation program. The program was developed to preserve lands and waters that provide valuable habitat for native plants and animals, protect air and water quality, add aesthetic value, and enhance public enjoyment of the outdoors. To date, 968 acres have been acquired in 22 preserves located throughout the Township. Strong efforts have been made to implement stewardship plans. The Board held eight (8) regular meetings, and conducted four (4) site visits to properties.

Land Preservation Advisory Board Members

Jon Mayes, Chairman,
James Kielbaso, Vice-Chair and Environmental Commission Liaison
Roland Harmes (resigned October, 2019)
Jamie Hiller
Yu Man Lee
Kirk Lapham
Dan Opsommer, Township Board Liaison
Mark Stephens, Park Commissioner Liaison

Program Highlights

- Installed five new land preservation signs
- Held a total of 13 stewardship days
- Worked with over 300 volunteers in the land preserves during 2019

Site restoration refers to anything that increases ecosystem health within the preserve.

1. Davis Foster
 - a. Removal of invasive species, autumn olive from front field
 - b. Prescribed burn was conducted March, 2019 (33 acre area)
 - c. 90 students from Murphy Elementary participated in seed ball project
2. Towar Woods
 - a. Tree planting- 500 trees planted and tubed in the spring
 - b. Invasive species management - glyphosate around newly planted trees to kill weeds
 - c. Over 5 acres of mature Buckthorn treated with basal bark herbicide
 - d. \$1,000 received as a generous donation to the tree planting project for 2019
3. SW Meridian Uplands
 - a. Continue grassland/prairie monitoring
4. Serafine
 - a. Four workdays complete removing shrubby invasive species such as Buckthorn, Autumn Olive and Honeysuckle
 - b. Jim Hewitt has also been working on his own multiple days a week to treat the shrubby invasives along the roadside
 - c. HOA paid for native plants to enhance the grassland area
5. Red Cedar Glen
 - a. Continue the removal of invasive autumn olive with neighbors
6. Ponderosa Preserve
 - a. Contracted for Japanese/Bohemian Knotweed removal over the next four years.
8. Sower Woods
 - a. Over 100 blue stem and zig zag goldenrod planted

DEPARTMENT RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

- Dennis Antone, Facilities Superintendent, retired and was replaced by Kati Adams (new Parks and Land Preserve Superintendent); and Rob MacKenzie (new Public Works Superintendent)
- Kit Rich, Director of Harris Nature Center, retired and was replaced by Kati Adams. Kati's former position was replaced with the hiring of Allison Goodman, Park Naturalist
- Darcie Weigand, Recreation Programmer, moved out of state and was replaced by Kayla Scelfo.
- Kelsey Dillon, Stewardship Coordinator, resigned and was replaced by Emma Campbell (start date January, 2020).
- Corey Patrick, resigned as the Farmers Market Manager and was replaced by Tom Cary.
- Welcomed two new Utility Workers to the Parks Maintenance Division: Mike Love and Tom Baker.

Department of Parks and Recreation 2019

We put the “P” and “R” in PRIME! In 2019, the Parks and Recreation Department continued their dedication to keep Meridian Township a vital and vibrant place to live through programs, special events, and management of publicly owned parks and natural areas.

This was accomplished through the dedicated efforts of the Park Commission, Land Preservation Advisory Board, a professional and enthusiastic staff of 15 full-time parks and recreation employees, numerous part-time and seasonal staff, and many passionate volunteers from the community. These individuals worked in concert to manage 955 acres of parkland, 76 miles of pedestrian/bicycle pathway, 20 miles of nature trails, the Harris Nature Center, Snell-Towar Recreation Center, Meridian Senior Center, year-around Farmers' Market, Meridian Historical Village, 968-acres of land preserves, and a wide variety of community recreation programs, special events and senior activities.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Marketplace on the Green

This year the project was awarded to Gordon Construction Services for the site work and restroom/office facility. The pavilion portion was awarded to Mid-States Recreation/Coverworx. This facility, when completed will contain a large pavilion, music stage, playground, patio area, rain gardens, and open green space and will become our premier community event location as well as the new home for the Meridian Township Farmers Market. Construction will begin in January 2020 with completion in late spring.

Harris Nature Center Pavilion and Restroom Project

The Harris Nature Center has proven to be a popular destination in our community for environmental education and accessible walks in the woods. Thanks to state and federal grants, a new waterless restroom building and picnic pavilion will enhance the usage of this township gem. The contract for construction was awarded in December 2019 with construction in spring of 2020.

Central Park Grant Projects: Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector and Gateway Walkway and Restroom in Historical Village

This is another example of leveraging local Park Millage funds as grants were received from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund for these two projects. Bids for construction were received and rejected in 2019 due to higher- than- anticipated costs. Time was spent reviewing and reworking the plans and was re-bid in late December. Proposals are due in at the end of January 2020. Construction will begin in the spring of 2020.

DOGS –DOGS-DOGS!

Small dogs in our community are very “yappy” (happy) with the new Small Dog Park that opened in 2019 in Nancy Moore Park. This fenced facility contains a welcoming area with a drinking fountain for pets and owners, dog washing station and benches. The control gate regulates use on a registration basis. Inside the fenced area is green grass, trees and fun agility equipment. Much of the installation work was done in-house by the Parks Maintenance staff. A total of 172 dogs are registered to utilize the park. Two special events took place there this year including a Howl-o-ween Costume Party and a Holiday Hounds party that included pictures with Santa!

Large Dogs have been patiently waiting for their new park. Their site in Central Park South was cleared of dead trees, graded and seeded in preparation for completion in the spring of 2020. This project will be completed in concert with the Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector Project.

Senior Center Outdoor Improvements Senior Center Outdoor Improvements

Operation of the Meridian Senior Center is a joint collaboration between the Okemos School District and Meridian Township. With a current membership of 510, the Senior Center is an important facility for enrichment, socialization and fitness for our older adults. New to the Center, this year was the development of an outdoor courtyard space including a paved loop trail. The new courtyard contains multiple pieces of outdoor furniture, landscaping and raised plant beds. A ribbon-cutting event was held with school and township officials present in October.

New Fence at Riverside Cemetery

The fencing in Riverside Cemetery had deteriorated to the point that repair was no longer an option. Therefore, new black aluminum fencing was installed this summer that closely replicates the wrought iron that existed there previously. Some portions of the old fence were saved for a future amenity in the Historical Village.

Parkland Additions

Nearly 45-acres of parkland were added to the park system in 2019. A big THANK YOU to the following donors:

- T.J Acquisitions, LLC donated 9-acres adjacent to Hillbrook Park in Haslett.
- Marilyn Pinnavaia Trust donated a 2-acre parcel adjacent to Brattin Woods Park in the Sleepy Hollow neighborhood.
- Dr. Maureen Sander donated a 31-9 acre parcel on Dobie Road named the Sander Farm Preserved Natural Area.
- In preparation for development of Marketplace on the Green, Meridian Township acquired 2.5 acres of green space on Central Park Drive as part of a land transfer agreement with CBL Properties/Meridian Mall.

New Trailhead and Directional Signage in Parks

This project began in 2018 and continued throughout 2019 of adding new trailhead and directional signage in multiple parks with the goal of making our parks more welcoming, informative and easier to navigate. All 20 miles of park trails were GPS marked and uploaded to a Google-based smartphone app called "All Trails". The remaining 15 parks will receive new signs in 2020.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Recreation Programs for Youth, Adults and Seniors

Providing recreation services to our residents creates a positive connection with government, other participants, as well as to our community. Programs were offered for persons of all ages and abilities including exercise and enrichment programs for seniors, environmental education classes and team sports for adults and youth, as well as our ever-popular Sporties for Shorties.

A. Okemos

1. K-6th Spring Season/556; Fall Season/423; Total = 979
2. K-7th Grade Flag Football Program: 120
3. T-Ball-8th Grade Baseball Programs: 109
4. 1st-8th Grade Softball Program: 106

B. Haslett

1. K-6th Grade Spring Soccer/247; Fall Season/247; Total = 553

2. K-6th Grade Basketball Program: 268
3. K-7th Flag Football Program: 140
4. 1st-5th Softball Program: 43
5. 1st-8th Grade Baseball Program: 98
6. T-Ball Program: 42
- C. Sporties for Shorties: 380 (4-6 year olds)
- D. Adult Kickball Leagues (Summer & Fall): 14 teams
- E. Adult Softball Leagues (Summer): 21 teams
- F. 4 on 4 Sand Volleyball Leagues (Summer & Fall): 25 teams
- G. 139 registered Seniors participated in exercise class at Meridian Mall M,W,F year around.

Special Events

Conducting special events engages a wide cross-section of community members with multiple areas of interest. Some of the larger events include:

- Love a Park- over 100 volunteers and service group members spruced-up nine park areas with flowers, mulch, trail building, playground surfacing maintenance
- Senior Health and Fitness Day – this event was held in Wonch Park and included vendor booths, demonstrations, dancing and food and was attended by 62 seniors.
- Halloween Adventures at Harris Nature Center – record setting attendance with 1,475
- Christmas in the Village in the Historical Village – Hosted by the Friends of Historic Meridian
- Blue and Grey Civil War Reenactment in the Historical Village –Hosted by the Friends of Historic Meridian
- Chinese New Year Celebration – this event is conducted at Meridian Mall each year and serves as an cultural education experience with a wide variety of entertainment.
- CELEBRATE MERIDIAN FESTIVAL This event was the major event of the year that included the farmers market, arts and crafts fair, pet adoption, inflatable obstacle course and children’s games, dunk tank, live music, car show, Historical Village tours, food trucks, beer and wine garden and FIREWORKS! It was great event with approximately 20,000 people in attendance.

Harris Nature Center

The Harris Nature Center continues to be one of the top gems of our park system by educating and engaging a large number of youth in environmental education and programs. Notable stats include:

- A. Adopt-an-Animal donations totaled \$625 for 8 animals
- B. Hosted 7 weeks of Annie’s Big Nature Lesson exposing 290 students to a weeklong of learning in an outdoor classroom
- C. 8,439 drop-in visitors
- D. 8,634 program participants (this includes ALL programs including school groups)
- E. Halloween Adventures had a record year with 1,475 participants
- F. Summer Camp had a record year with 440 participants
- G. Kicked off Music in Nature with 3 dates and had 225 attendees
- H. Welcomed a new American Crow to our education programs
- I. Designed and installed new interpretive signs at the Boulder Garden
- J. HNC is the only nature center in the Great Lansing Area with Live Animals. Harris is home to 24 animals including several species of reptiles, amphibians and birds.
- K. Welcomed Allison Goodman to our staff full-time!
- L. Upgraded rooms at HNC to create new, much needed, classroom space

Pavilion Rentals

In 2019, the Township rented pavilions at the following parks: Wonch, Central Park, North Meridian Road Park, Hartrick Park, Nancy Moore Park and Towner Road Park.

	Total Days
Pavilion Rentals	161
3 Special Events (7 days)& 4 - 5K Races (4 days)	11
Weddings	6
7 Tournaments	27
Cricket	12
Total Reservation Days	217

Meridian Township Farmers Market

The Meridian Township Farmers Market continues to be a valuable community resource and social gathering opportunity. New this year was the time change on Wednesdays from 8am-2pm to 3pm to 7pm. This change welcomed new vendors and food trucks and better accommodated after-work customers.

- The Spring and Summer Markets had a combined total of 85 unique vendors – 58 of whom were seasonal and 27 daily vendors.
- Winter (Dec-April) 10 dates 10am-2pm inside Meridian Mall - The Winter Market hosted 42 vendors

The Market once again participated in State and Federal Food Assistance programs including SNAP, Double-Up Food Bucks, Senior Project Fresh and WIC. A total of \$12,350 of assistance money was redeemed at our market in 2019.

During the last five weeks of the outdoor season, we collected produce donations from our vendors and forwarded them to the Haslett Food Pantry at Haslett Community Church. This donation served 127 different households (240 adults/156 children).

Meridian Senior Center

The Meridian Senior Center, located at Chippewa Middle School, provides for the educational, enrichment and social needs of adults aged 55 and over for all older adults in the Township. This program is a joint effort between Meridian Township and Okemos Public Schools.

In 2019, 2,552 programs were conducted with member attendance at 25,050 and non-member attendance at 1,283. The three most popular programs were:

1. Games (with 2,948 participants)
2. Fitness and exercise (with 3,619 participants)
3. Congregate meal program (with 15,743 participants.)

The Senior Center ended 2019 with 503 members (82 new members) and had 35 volunteers. A new addition to the center was the outdoor patio area that now expands available use and opportunity for new programs. The Haslett-Okemos Rotary Club funded much-needed upgrades and landscaping to the front sign.

Deer Management Program (9th year)

The Deer Management Program utilized local archery hunters to assist with managing the white tailed deer over-population in Meridian Township by participating in this highly managed cull program. All participants were background screened, participated in an

orientation and proficiency test, and then assigned to a specific location to hunt. In addition to the 80 deer that were culled through the program in 2019, Township maintenance staff picked up 88 additional dead deer along Township roadways.

Deer Management Program Statistics

(Collision based on data provided on the MSP "Traffic Crash Reporting System – Crash Statistics Report Selection Criteria")

	Total Hunters	Properties Hunted	Deer Harvested	Reported Deer/Car Collisions
2011	25	7	43	152
2012	50	18	90	153
2013	60	20	127	180
2014	73	21	150	137
2015	30	19	63	144
2016	73	31	73	164
2017	66	30	80	129
2018	74	38	57	129
2019	85	38	80	Available 2/20

PARK COMMISSION

The Meridian Township Park Commissioners are elected to 4-year terms and have the responsibility of setting policy and direction for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks. In 2019, they held 11 regular meetings. Mark Stephens was reappointed as the Park Commission's representative to the Land Preservation Advisory Board.

Park Commissioners

- Michael McDonald, Chair
- Amanda Lick, Vice Chair
- Mark Stephens
- Annika Schaetzl (resigned 11/2019)
- Courtney Wisinski (appointed to Township Board 1/2019)
- Ami Van Antwerp (appointed 2/2019)

LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Meridian Township Land Preservation Advisory Board members are appointed to 4-year terms with a two term limit. The LPAB has the responsibility of advising staff in implementing the land preservation program. The program was developed to preserve lands and waters that provide valuable habitat for native plants and animals, protect air and water quality, add aesthetic value, and enhance public enjoyment of the outdoors. To date, 968 acres have been acquired in 22 preserves located throughout the Township. Strong efforts have been made to implement stewardship plans. The Board held eight (8) regular meetings, and conducted four (4) site visits to properties.

Land Preservation Advisory Board Members

Jon Mayes, Chairman,
James Kielbaso, Vice-Chair and Environmental Commission Liaison
Roland Harmes (resigned October, 2019)
Jamie Hiller
Yu Man Lee
Kirk Lapham
Dan Opsommer, Township Board Liaison
Mark Stephens, Park Commissioner Liaison

Program Highlights

- Installed five new land preservation signs
- Held a total of 13 stewardship days
- Worked with over 300 volunteers in the land preserves during 2019

Site restoration refers to anything that increases ecosystem health within the preserve.

1. Davis Foster
 - a. Removal of invasive species, autumn olive from front field
 - b. Prescribed burn was conducted March, 2019 (33 acre area)
 - c. 90 students from Murphy Elementary participated in seed ball project
2. Towar Woods
 - a. Tree planting- 500 trees planted and tubed in the spring
 - b. Invasive species management - glyphosate around newly planted trees to kill weeds
 - c. Over 5 acres of mature Buckthorn treated with basal bark herbicide
 - d. \$1,000 received as a generous donation to the tree planting project for 2019
3. SW Meridian Uplands
 - a. Continue grassland/prairie monitoring
4. Serafine
 - a. Four workdays complete removing shrubby invasive species such as Buckthorn, Autumn Olive and Honeysuckle
 - b. Jim Hewitt has also been working on his own multiple days a week to treat the shrubby invasives along the roadside
 - c. HOA paid for native plants to enhance the grassland area
5. Red Cedar Glen
 - a. Continue the removal of invasive autumn olive with neighbors
6. Ponderosa Preserve
 - a. Contracted for Japanese/Bohemian Knotweed removal over the next four years.
8. Sower Woods
 - a. Over 100 blue stem and zig zag goldenrod planted

DEPARTMENT RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

- Dennis Antone, Facilities Superintendent, retired and was replaced by Kati Adams (new Parks and Land Preserve Superintendent); and Rob MacKenzie (new Public Works Superintendent)
- Kit Rich, Director of Harris Nature Center, retired and was replaced by Kati Adams. Kati's former position was replaced with the hiring of Allison Goodman, Park Naturalist
- Darcie Weigand, Recreation Programmer, moved out of state and was replaced by Kayla Scelfo.
- Kelsey Dillon, Stewardship Coordinator, resigned and was replaced by Emma Campbell (start date January, 2020).
- Corey Patrick, resigned as the Farmers Market Manager and was replaced by Tom Cary.
- Welcomed two new Utility Workers to the Parks Maintenance Division: Mike Love and Tom Baker.

Annual Report

Parks and Recreation Department Report January 21, 2021



2020: A year of renewed appreciation of our parks and open spaces

The Covid-19 pandemic brought us stay-at-home orders and social distancing. Simple things like a walk in the park has proven to be more important than ever. Many of our residents gained a renewed appreciation and recognition of parks as critical suburban infrastructure. Parks and recreation staff saw record numbers of park visitors and volunteers. Staff swiftly adapted and mobilized to keep our green spaces open and to safely support physical, emotional, and mental health. As a group we strive to cultivate a sense of place, meaning, and ownership for Meridian Township residents.

2020 was our busiest park construction year to date with total construction costs of over \$3 million dollars. The park improvements made in 2020 mean that 2021 will be filled with many more exciting opportunities for our residents to get outside!

1. Marketplace on the Green

The ribbon was officially cut for this facility in October consisting of a large pavilion; restroom; office space; music stage; playground; outdoor musical instruments; patio area with seating; rain gardens; and open green space. The market also features electricity for each vendor and an area with a bike fix-it station, memorial plaque, and seating that was funded by donations received in memory of former Trustee John Veenstra. **Marketplace on the Green received an MParks Design Award** that will be awarded virtually in February, 2021.

2. Central Park Grant Projects: Central Meridian Regional Trail Connector and Gateway Walkway and Restroom in Historical Village

This is an example of leveraging local Park Millage funds as grants were received from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund for these two projects. Construction began on both projects during the spring of 2020. The Gateway Walkway and Restroom in the Historical Village was completed in the fall of 2020 and the Central Meridian Regional Trail is expected to be completed in spring 2021. Some highlights of these projects include a fishing dock, boardwalk, interpretive signage, a bike fix it station, and electricity for motorized wheelchairs.

3. DOGS HAVING A DOG-GONE GOOD TIME

Large Dogs finally got their very own dog park in 2020. A total of 231 dogs are currently registered to utilize the large dog park. The park is located in Central Park South, directly across from the Marketplace on the Green. It features a natural walking path, control gate, dog fountain, open grassy area, and shaded areas with lots of opportunities for good sniffs! The entryway has a beautiful dog mural that was painted during Celebrate Meridian in 2018. The Park Maintenance staff installed a majority of the items for this project. A HOWL-O-WEEN party was held in October and fun was had by all 30 dogs who attended.

Small dogs in our community continue to be very happy with the new Small Dog Park that opened in 2019 in Nancy Moore Park. This fenced facility contains a welcoming area with a drinking fountain for pets and owners, dog washing station and benches. The control gate regulates use on a registration basis. Inside the fenced area is green grass, trees and fun agility equipment. A total of 300 dogs are registered to utilize the small dog park. Our office received many compliments on both of the dog parks and there are regular groups of people and dogs who meet their on a daily basis. Visitors have reported to staff how valuable the space is and that it was their only opportunity for socialization during the pandemic. If you are ever feeling down, just go and sit outside the small dog park around 4 p.m. and your frown will immediately turn upside down!

4. Harris Nature Center Pavilion and Restroom Project

The Harris Nature Center has always been a popular destination in our community for environmental education and accessible walks in the woods. Thanks to state and federal grants, a new waterless restroom building and picnic pavilion will enhance the usage of this township gem. The construction began in spring of 2020 and is complete with the exception of landscaping that will be done in the spring. A special feature of the pavilion is the adjacent patio that features engraved donor pavers (still available!) and a grill. This pavilion is a much-needed amenity as our pavilion rentals throughout the park system are very popular.

5. Harris Nature Center Bird Overlook

The Harris Nature Center has been able to complete many projects due to the support from the Harris Nature Center Foundation Board. The Board's funding, along with a grant from the Capitol Region Community Foundation allowed for the construction of a 20' x 20' accessible bird overlook at the Center. All-weather binoculars and a Michigan Birds interpretive signage serves to enhance the experience.

6. MSU to Lake Lansing Trail Hub Acquisition Grant

Meridian Township received notification in December of its successful grant proposal from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for acquisition of a parcel to enhance the entrance to Nancy Moore Park and also to create a hub for the upcoming MSU to Lake

Lansing Trail. This property will provide a vital link and opportunity to build a rest stop for trail enthusiasts and community members to explore and utilize the regional trail system. Funds for this acquisition won't be released until mid-2021.

7. Pickleball Courts

The pickleball courts at Hillbrook and Towner Road Parks were more popular than ever in 2020. The courts were full on a daily basis with an enthusiastic group of seniors who have continued to play outdoors through December!

8. New Trailhead and Directional Signage in Parks

This wayfinding project, which began in 2018, added new trailhead and directional signage in multiple parks. The goal is to make the parks more welcoming, informative and easier to navigate. An additional 15 parks received new signs in 2020 and we have three more to go in 2021. All 20 miles of park trails were GPS marked and uploaded to a Google-based smartphone app called "All Trails". In addition, Ingham County funded and installed numerous trail signs throughout the Township in locations along the cross-country trail and various parks including Hartrick Park, Central Park, and Nancy Moore Park. The signs were installed by our Parks Maintenance staff.

9. Parking Lot Improvements

Our Parks Maintenance department installed an **overflow parking lot in Towner Road Park** utilizing asphalt millings from the current road projects in the Township. This area was on the original development plan but was put on hold because of costs. In addition, we also **paved the entry drive to Legg Park** with recycled asphalt millings as well. This work will allow the park to remain open all year as former muddy conditions would force temporary park closures throughout the year. This type of application creates a firm, stable and pervious surface.

10. Pathway Maintenance

In 2020, the Parks Department made a very strong effort in trimming and mowing the Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathways. Staff trimmed and mowed 80 miles of pedestrian/bicycle pathways (prior to 2020, this work was contracted out). We received numerous phone calls during 2020 from residents telling us "The pathways and park trails have NEVER looked this good!"

11. Harris Nature Center Facility/Programming Report

The Harris Nature Center building received a beautiful facelift in 2020. Improvements included: a renovated new classroom space with ten bench risers (funded by the HNC Foundation); new paint throughout the entire interior of the building, a refurbished archway with lights at the entrance, and a new split-rail fence around the frog pond all completed by our Park Maintenance staff. Despite the pandemic, HNC staff made great efforts to offer programs to engage the public with the natural world while still keeping people safe. Quick Facts: ● Hosted two weeks of Annie's Big Nature Lesson with 100

students participating in a weeklong outdoor classroom ● Hosted 1,979 drop-in visitors ● Hosted 1,467 program participants (both in person and virtual) ● Implemented new virtual programming for schools, senior centers, and families ● Created and offered Private Guided programs (these were extremely popular).

12. Farmers' Market Report

In 2020, the market moved from the Central Park Pavilion to the Meridian Mall parking lot in an effort to space out the vendors to accommodate Covid-19 safety protocols. The Market officially moved into the new Marketplace on the Green in October. Quick Facts: ● Market Days in Operation: 51 (33 Saturdays & 18 Wednesdays) ● Days missed due to Covid: 5 (3 winter and 2 spring) ● 101 unique vendors ● 61 new vendors ● Total Customers: 62,756 people ● Food assistance utilized at the Market: Total= \$23,809

13. Senior Center

Operation of the Meridian Senior Center is a joint collaboration between the Okemos School District and Meridian Township. The Meridian Senior Center was created to provide a friendly, welcoming atmosphere for persons age 55 and over to gather and engage in programs and services to meet the ever-changing lifestyle needs for older persons throughout the community. With a current membership of 362 members (down from 2020 due to Covid-19), the Senior Center is an important facility for enrichment, socialization, meals, information and resources, and fitness for our older adults. While quarantining helped to mitigate seniors' risk of contracting Covid, it also put many of the community's older adults at risk of isolation and depression. The Senior Center adapted to Covid-19 guidelines and taught the seniors new skills like using Zoom and how to use and find information on the Senior Center Facebook and web page. In addition, the Center staff made regular phone calls to check in on all of the seniors. The Center held many events on Zoom including bingo, lunch dates, and educational sessions. Since March of 2020, the online class offerings grew from just 1 -2 per week to 1-2 per day. During the summer and fall the Center offered some in person outdoor events in the wonderful new senior courtyard (installed in 2019) such as birthday celebrations, Trunk or Treat, Jingle Bell Drive through, and exercise classes. We strongly believe these actions and activities have helped many of our members. We receive positive feedback weekly on the programs we are offering, the sense of normalcy and purpose we bring to many of our members day, and how helpful we have been to them during this time. Quick Facts: ● 27 New members this year ● 362 Total members ● 206 Active Members ● 383 Non-Members or guests ● 11 Volunteers who gave 69 hours of service ● total events- 1296 events.

14. Senior Stretch Program

One of our most popular recreation programs for older adults is our Senior Stretch. (This program is separate and independent from exercise classes offered through the Senior Center). A group of approximately 50 seniors gathered three times per week at Meridian Mall for exercise and socialization until Covid-19 caused a shutdown. Following a brief

pause, we moved their operation outdoors to Nancy Moore Park and then to the former Farmers' Market pavilion where they continued to meet through mid-December.

15. Deer Management – 10th Year

The Parks Department placed and managed 75 hunters on 1,600 acres of parks and land preserves (41 properties) during the 2020 deer management archery program as well as on seven private properties in the Township. A much stronger effort was put forth to increase the cull from 87 in 2019- to 300 in 2020. This goal was achieved in combination of our volunteer archers during the regular hunting season as well as through a supplemental cull from January to mid-March 2021 utilizing the Police Department. Quick Facts: ● Total deer harvested during archery program= 176●Total venison donated to local foodbanks= 2,400 pounds (9,600 meals provided) ● Dollar amount of venison donated= \$26,376● Total roadkill deer removed: 75 (these deer are not donated). This program was the most successful in its ten-year history based on the efforts of Jane Greenway, Emma Campbell, Mike Ellis, Chief Plaga, Sgt. Andrew McCready, and the Meridian Police Department.

16. Environmental Stewardship

In 2020 we welcomed Emma Campbell as the new Stewardship Coordinator and she has proven to be a very valuable asset to the Parks team. Emma developed and launched the first ever Meridian Conservation Corp (MCC), a community volunteer group devoted to increasing community involvement in the parks and preserve areas. The program is designed to grow awareness of volunteer opportunities involving the care and conservation of Meridian Township's expansive local green spaces. Through the program, the Department can utilize the community's knowledge and expertise in one concentrated group. Volunteers have the opportunity to choose which path of conservation they would like to follow and in what park or preserve area. Focus groups include: Forest Watch Team, Clean Up Crew, Trailblazers, and the Invasive Species Strike Team. In partnership with the Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative, stewardship workdays are held every other Saturday at various parks and preserves around the Township. Quick Facts: ● Volunteers collectively completed 499 hours of habitat restoration ● 65 volunteers worked in seven parks and preserves ● Aided Meridian Tree Team plant 40 native trees at Chippewa Middle School ● Removed 246 pounds of invasive dame's rocket and garlic mustard from 2 parks ● Held 15 stewardship workdays at 10 different parks and preserves ● Removed 10 different species of invasive plants● Cultivated 22 native plant species in 2 preserves ● Removed 263 pounds of litter from 12 parks● Managed one unpaid summer intern who spent 60 hours mapping invasive species in the parks and preserves. Voters also approved a renewal of the Land Preservation Millage at the rate of 1/10th for ten years.

17. Youth Sports and Events

- K-6th Grade Basketball – 285 students
- Sporties for Shorties – 20
- Howl-o-ween Event at Dog Park – 30 dogs and Owners
- Drive Thru Santa 37 vehicles and 76+ participants



A Prime Community

Copy of Meridian Township - Parks and Recreation Community Survey - Master Plan 2020

Dear Meridian Township Resident:

The information from this survey will provide direction and vision for parks and recreation services and facilities for the next five years and beyond. Your input is valuable and your participation is appreciated. The survey should take approximately ten minutes to complete.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your name be identified with any results and your personal information will not be shared. Everyone who returns a completed questionnaire will be entered into a drawing to win one of four \$50 gift certificates to a Meridian Township business of your choice.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Jane Greenway, Senior Parks and Land Management Coordinator, at 517-853-4610 or greenway@meridian.mi.us

1. Please choose the category that describes you best:

- Meridian Township Resident
- Meridian Township Business
- I do not live in Meridian Township but I do utilize the parks and preserves

2. Please check the PARKS you have visited in the past year. Check all that apply. CAN WE LINK A MAP HERE?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brattin Woods Park, 5851 Okemos Road, Haslett | <input type="checkbox"/> Marshall Park, 6105 Marsh Road, Haslett |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Bend Heights Neighborhood Park, 2280 Kenmore, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Nancy Moore Park, 1960 Gaylord C. Smith Ct., Haslett |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Park, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Newton Road Park, 6025 Newton Road, Haslett |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Park South, 1990 Central Park Drive, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> North Meridian Road Park, 5191 Meridian Road, Williamston |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eastgate Park, 4203 S. Meridian Road, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Orlando Park, 1275 Orlando Drive, Haslett |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ferguson Park, 4540 Okemos Road, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Ottawa Hills Park, 4980 Hillcrest Avenue, Okemos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Hills Natural Area Park, 4625 Northview, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Red Cedar Natural Area Park, 1455 Oscoda Road, Okemos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Road, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Sander Farm Natural Area Park, 4344 Dobie Road, Okemos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hartrick Park, 3685 Hulett Road, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Schreiner Park, 5039 Algonquin, Okemos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hillbrook Park, 1747 Lake Lansing Road, Haslett | <input type="checkbox"/> Spengler Marsh, 5929 Lake Drive, Haslett |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Hills Park, 4730 Nakoma Drive, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Tacoma Hills Natural Area Park, 1815 Hamilton Road, Okemos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Lansing Marsh 1430 Lake Drive, Haslett | <input type="checkbox"/> Ted Black Woods, 540 Grand River, Okemos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Lansing Park North (County Park), 6260 E Lake Drive, Haslett | <input type="checkbox"/> Towar Park, 6146 Porter Avenue, East Lansing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Lansing Park South (County Park), 1621 Pike Street, Haslett | <input type="checkbox"/> Towner Road Park, 2055 Towner Road, Haslett |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legg Park, 3891 Van Atta Road, Okemos | <input type="checkbox"/> Wonch Park, 4555 Okemos Road, Okemos |

3. Please check the LAND PRESERVES you have visited in the past year. Check all that apply. CAN WE LINK A MAP HERE?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Meridian Uplands Preserve, Okemos Road 1/2 mile north of Grand River Ave | <input type="checkbox"/> Northridge Preserve, Fenwick Ct off Mereford Ct |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Davis Foster Preserve, 5120 Van Atta Road | <input type="checkbox"/> Ponderosa Preserve, End of Ponderosa Drive, south of railroad tracks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Grove Preserve, East Side of Saginaw and the west side of Newton Road | <input type="checkbox"/> Red Cedar Glen, End of Sylvan Glen Road |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Crouse Preserve, N side of Newman Rd, 1 mile N of Grand River | <input type="checkbox"/> Red Cedae River East Preserve, SW corner of Grand River Ave and Meridian Rd |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hubbel Preserve, Okemos Road approx. 1/2 mile north of Grand River Ave | <input type="checkbox"/> Southwest Meridian Uplands, S of Mt Hope, N of Bennett Rd |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kuzma Preserve, East side of Carleton St north of Haslett Rd | <input type="checkbox"/> Sower Woods Preserve, N and S of Sower Blvd |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Lansing North Preserve (Southern addition to Ingham Co's Lake Lansing North Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Sumbal Preserve, Okemos Rd, adjacent to Ferguson Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Lansing South Land Preserve, W side of Carleton St, N of Haslett Rd | <input type="checkbox"/> Tank Wetland Preserve, Near Carleton and Lake Drive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandenberg Woods Preserve, Hamilton Road | <input type="checkbox"/> Tihart Preserve (Linn), Tihard Road |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Central Wetland Preserve, Haslett Rd, 1/2 mile W of Marsh Rd | <input type="checkbox"/> Tihart/Cornell Wetland Preserve, SW corner of Tihart Rd and Cornell Rd |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nemoke Preserve, Nemoke Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Towar Woods Preserve, NW corner of Township between Towar Woods and Walnut Hills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newman Equities Preserve, Central Park Dr adjacent to MSUFCU | <input type="checkbox"/> Towner Road Wetland Preserve, Towner Road adjacent to Towner Rd Park |

4. Please check the MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP FACILITIES you have visited in the past year. Check all that apply. CAN WE LINK A MAP HERE?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Historical Village | <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Service Center in Nancy Moore Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nokomis Cultural Learning Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Township Hall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harris Nature Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Public Safety (Police) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snell-Towar Recreation Center, Porter Drive | <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Fire Station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Senior Center at Chippewa Middle School | |

5. Please check the EVENTS you have attended in the past year. Check all that apply.

- Celebrate Meridian, Food Truck Rally
- Dog Park Parties
- Memorial Day Service at Glendale Cemetery
- 5k or other race in Meridian Township Parks
- Harris Nature Center Events
- Halloween Celebration at Townhall and Fire Stations
- Meridian Garden Club Event (plant sale, educational sessions)
- Meridian Historical Village Events (blue & green, guided tours, class field trip)
- Nokomis Cultural Learning Center (craft nights, educational sessions, class field trip)

6. How satisfied are you with the Meridian Township parks and facilities?

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
Maintenance of facilities and parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Type of facilities/amenities/pavilions that are available in parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling of safety in parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convenience of park locations to your home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facility rental fees (pavilions, sports fields, nature center...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of facilities (soccer fields, ball diamonds, meeting rooms...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall quality of facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Do you or any members of your household participate in the following leisure/free time activities (in Meridian Township parks or elsewhere)? Check all that apply.

- Walking/hiking
- Jogging/running
- Baseball, softball, kickball
- Soccer
- Football
- Basketball
- Lacrosse
- Racquet sports (tennis, racquetball...)
- Ice skating sports (hockey, ice skating...)
- Swimming
- Fitness/wellness programs (aerobics, yoga)
- Inline skating
- Skateboarding
- Biking (paved trails or street)
- Mountain biking
- Picnicking in parks
- Fat tire biking
- Playing on playgrounds in parks
- Frisbee/disc golf
- Dog walking
- Kayaking/Canoeing
- Volleyball
- Sledding/tobogganing
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Horseback riding
- Nature observation
- Visiting Farmers' Market
- Nature Center Events/Classes/Camps
- Studio arts (painting, sculpting, drawing...)
- Performing arts
- Attending festivals or special events
- Visiting museums, historic sites, or exhibits
- Community service or volunteering

Other (please specify)

8. Generally speaking, how would you prioritize the need for each of the following park additions?

	High	Medium	Low
New Farmers' Market facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neighborhood parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	High	Medium	Low
Splash pad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skate park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indoor basketball facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreation center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
River access areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restroom buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paved trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpaved trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mountain bike trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picnic pavilions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sledhill improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ice skate rink	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baseball/softball fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Soccer/lacrosse fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flower garden areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trail signage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tennis courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indoor swimming pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor swimming pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disc golf course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting/classroom space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fishing opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Land acquisition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please comment)

9. In the past 12 months, have you OR other members in your household participated in a program or event organized by Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

10. For residents who participate in our recreation programs or have booked park pavilions, how would you rate the following:

	High	Medium	Low
Office staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Program instructors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Registration process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Park pavilion policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please comment)

11. How would you rate recreation programming for the ages listed below?

	High	Medium	Low	Don't Know
Pre-School Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elementary School Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Middle School Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High School Age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adults (less than 60 years of age)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adults (more than 60 years of age)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please comment)

12. Please indicate all sources that you have used to search for information about events, programs, or activities in Meridian Township.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Magazine (comes by mail 2x per year) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flyers to Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meridian Township Website | <input type="checkbox"/> HOM-TV |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calling Parks and Recreation Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs or Banners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook, Twitter, Instagram | <input type="checkbox"/> Word-of-Mouth (friends, family) |

Other (please specify)

13. I was NOT able to participate in leisure/free time activities as much as I wanted for the following reasons (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It was difficult to find others to participate with. | <input type="checkbox"/> I was too busy with my family (caring for children/adults/household duties). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I was too busy with work or school. | <input type="checkbox"/> I did not have the physical ability. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admission fees or other charges for facilities and programs were too high. | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know who to contact for programs or activities that I like to do. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I did not have transportation. | <input type="checkbox"/> Too far from home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I did not have the energy or motivation. | |

Other (please comment)

14. Below is a list of potential benefits of participating in leisure/free time activities. Please check all the following benefits that are important to you.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spend time with my family or friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my mood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise | <input type="checkbox"/> Gain a sense of accomplishment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop my skills and abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Learn something new |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve my physical health | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet new people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Release or relieve stress | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend time with people who enjoy the same things I do |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep my mind sharp | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying the outdoors |

Other (please specify)

15. How can Meridian Township Parks and Recreation better serve you and other members of your household? (Please explain)

16. Please indicate whether you OR other members in your household have visited the following facilities or parks during the past 12 months.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hannah Community Center (East Lansing) | <input type="checkbox"/> MSU "U" Club |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ingham County Parks (Lake Lansing, Hawk Island, Burchfield, Hope Soccer Complex) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness clubs (Powerhouse, Golds Gym, Curves) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parkwood YMCA | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer Zone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lansing YMCA | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Lansing Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michigan Athletic Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Other East Lansing Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban Ice | <input type="checkbox"/> Court One |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East Lansing Parks (Aquatic Center/Softball/Dog Park Complex, Soccer Complex, Patriarche Park) | <input type="checkbox"/> LISA (Lansing Indoor Sports Arena) |

Other (please specify)

17. Please select the statements that describe you or members of your household.

- I volunteer in my community on a regular basis.
- I am satisfied with my level of fitness and health.
- I am proud to tell others where I live.
- I participate in leisure/free time activities as often as I would like.
- I am committed to making the community a better place to live.

Other (please specify)

18. Would you be willing to support an additional millage for PARK improvements and maintenance in Meridian Township?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

19. Would you be willing to support an additional millage for LAND PRESERVATION acquisition and maintenance in Meridian Township?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

The final portion of this survey asks for descriptive information about you and your household. This data will be kept strictly confidential and used for statistical purposes only.

20. How many people, including you, live in your home?

*** 21. What is your zip code?**

48823

48840

48864

48895

22. What are the ages of all members of your household?

	0-10 yrs.	11-20 yrs.	21-50 yrs.	51-75 yrs.	76-100 yrs.
Yourself	<input type="radio"/>				
Adult 1	<input type="radio"/>				
Adult 2	<input type="radio"/>				
Adult 3	<input type="radio"/>				
Child 1	<input type="radio"/>				
Child 2	<input type="radio"/>				
Child 3	<input type="radio"/>				
Child 4	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

23. Are you or any of the members of your household persons with a mild or severe disability?

	person with mild disability	person with severe disability
Yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Types

Creating opportunities for all ages and abilities is a strong priority for Meridian Township Parks and Recreation. In order to improve the accessibility of our parks we have created a Universal Access Advisory Board. Please contact Jane Greenway at 517-853-4610 or greenway@meridian.mi.us if you are interested in becoming a member.

24. How many years have you lived in:

Your present home or residence

Meridian Township

Michigan

25. Do you own or rent your present home or residence?

Own

Rent

Other (please specify)

26. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

27. If you would like to be entered into a drawing to win one of four \$50 gift certificates for a Meridian Township business of your choice, please enter your contact information. Again, your responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your name be identified with any results.

Name:	<input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>
Address 2:	<input type="text"/>
City/Town:	<input type="text"/>
State:	<input type="text" value="-- select state --"/>
ZIP:	<input type="text"/>
Country:	<input type="text"/>
Email Address:	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number:	<input type="text"/>