

# Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve General Management Plan



## Summary of Stakeholder Input Workshop

In order to gather targeted input from governmental, non-profit, and business/tourism entities, the Planning Team invited a group of stakeholders to participate in a facilitated input workshop held on September 12, 2017, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Super 8 in Brooklyn, MI. Representatives of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) provided the stakeholders a brief overview of Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve (WLP), including its natural and historic resources, its jointly-managed status, and its current recreational offerings. The stakeholders were also presented the General Management Plan process, timeline, and an explanation of the plan elements that their input would inform: the Statements of Significance, the Management Zone map, and a list of Action Items intended to be accomplished over the next ten years.

The stakeholders were divided into small-table discussion groups, which completed a series of exercises describing the park's context, the park itself, the stakeholders' vision for the park's future, as well as the park's potential benefit to the larger community. Each table then reported out to the larger group. The results of the table exercises are outlined below.

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STAKEHOLDER INPUT WORKSHOP ATTENDEES	
Name	Representing
Bob Jenson	Village of Brooklyn
Dan Ezekiel	Washtenaw Parks & Recreation Comm.
Pamela Johnson	Norvell Township
Pat Vaillencourt	Village of Manchester
Jeff Wallace	Village of Manchester
Jae Guetschow	Village of Brooklyn
Barb Fuller	Washtenaw Parks & Recreation Comm. & Washtenaw Road Comm.
Cindy Hubbell	Brooklyn Irish Hills Chamber of Commerce
James Cole	Jackson County Department of Transportation
Laura Sutton	Manchester Historical Society
Michael Overton	Jackson County
Scott Damon	Cambridge Township Fire
Kenny Price	Jackson County Conservation District
Diane Huhn	Michigan Audubon Society
Roy Townsend	Washtenaw County Road Comm.
Coy Vaughn	Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Comm.
Jim & Jan Knutson	Knutson's Sporting Goods
Bob Marans	Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Comm.
Julieanna Frost	Walker Tavern & Sienna Heights University
Maggie Bilby	Friends of Walker Tavern
Eric Johnson	Norvell Township
Grant Bauman	Region 2 Planning Comm.
Mark Vysoky	Jackson County Parks & Recreation Comm.
Lori Fitzgibbons	Jackson County Conservation District
Al Petrulis	Camp Dainaya
Bill VanderZouwen	Pheasants Forever
Dane Cramer	Ducks Unlimited
Tanya DeOliveira	Region 2 Planning Comm.
Matt Dame	Norvell Township
Frank Bolak	Walker Tavern & Boy Scouts of America

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## Exercise 1: Say one word or phrase that describes the Irish Hills area.

Stakeholders' impression of the Irish Hills area include its recreation, wildlife and nature, beauty, lakes and water, rolling hills, vacation homes and cottages, history, and how scenic and peaceful the area is. The words and phrases that were mentioned at two or more tables are listed below.

Items	Times Mentioned
Recreation	4
Wildlife/ Natural	4
Lakes/Water	3
Beauty	2
Hills	2
Peaceful/Calming	2
Vacation Cabins/Cottages	2
Historic	2
Scenic	2

## Exercise 2: Say one word or phrase that describes WLP right now.

The stakeholders recognized WLP's abundance of nature and wildlife, but also described the park as hard to find or unknown. Below are words and phrases that were mentioned at two or more tables.

Items	Times Mentioned
Beautiful/Scenic	6
Nature/Wildlife	5
Hard to Find/Unknown	4
Peaceful/Tranquil	4
Waterfowl/Birding	3
Historic	3
Opportunity/Potential	3
Trails	2

## Exercise 3: Say one word or phrase that you want to describe WLP in the future.

Stakeholders would like to see WLP as a place for trail connections, education, birding, and a destination, providing economic advantages, and expanded through acquisition of additional property. The table below shows items mentioned by two or more tables.

Items	Times Mentioned
Trail Connections	6
Education	4
Destination	3
Birding	2
Economic Advantages	2
Additional Property	2

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## Exercise 4: What natural or cultural aspects should be prioritized at WLP?

Stakeholders prioritized the following for WLP: protecting endangered species, preserving the Underground Railroad history and Native American history, having non-motorized lake access, and prioritizing the lake and other water features. The items that were mentioned at two tables or more are listed in the table below.

Items	Times Mentioned
Endangered Species	4
Underground Railroad History	4
Native American History	3
Lake/Water Features	3
Non-motorized Lake Access	2

## Exercise 5: What recreational activities should be prioritized at WLP?

The stakeholders were asked to prioritize recreational activities at WLP, and some even chose to mention activities that were not desirable. Activities they want at WLP include hiking, biking and mountain biking trails, kayaking, cross-country skiing, and star-gazing. Activities they find undesirable include anything motor-vehicle related and camping. The table below lists the “wants” and “don’t wants” for items that were mentioned at two or more tables.

Items	Times Mentioned
“Wants”	
Hiking	5
Birding	5
Biking Trails/Mountain Biking/Fat Tire Biking	4
Kayaking	4
Cross-Country Skiing	3
Star-Gazing	3
Fishing	3
Photography	2
Picnicking	2
Regulated Hunting	2
Wildlife Observation	2

Items	Times Mentioned
“Don’t Wants”	
Motorized Vehicles	5
Motorized Boats	4
Overnight Camping	4

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## Exercise 6: What are some of the resources in WLP that, if properly leveraged, could benefit the larger community?

Resources stakeholders thought could benefit the larger community were trail connections, educational programs in schools and outdoor classrooms, website information, and off-site rental opportunities. Below, resources mentioned at two or more tables are listed.

Items	Times Mentioned
Trail Connections	4
Education / Outdoor Classroom / Programs in Schools	4
Website Information	2
Off-Site Rental Opportunities	2

## Exercise 7: What are some collaboration and partnership opportunities that WLP presents for local communities and stakeholders?

Stakeholders listed schools and libraries, friends group, and government/state and county partnerships as some collaboration and partnership opportunities. The collaboration and partnership opportunities mentioned at three or more tables are listed below.

Items	Times Mentioned
Schools/Library	5
Wildlife Groups	4
Friends Group	3
Government/State and County Collaboration	3

This input will be considered by the planning team when creating a 10-year action plan.