

Section VII

Implementation, Operations, and Management Plan

Overview

The implementation of the master plan for St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park will require significant initial and long-term capital investments.

The implementation of the master plan for St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park will require significant initial and long-term capital investments for physical development, ecological stewardship, operations, and maintenance. Undoubtedly, implementation will occur over a number of years as funding and other resources become available and plans become refined and ready for implementation. The following considers an overall strategy for implementation of the plan. This section also considers Washington County's approach to operations and management as it pertains to this park.

Implementation Cost Projections

The cost analysis is based on a combination of site-specific development requirements and projects of similar size and complexity.

Site Preparation and Development Program Cost Projections

The following cost analysis defines the potential costs associated with each development component of the master plan. It is based on a combination of site-specific development requirements and projects of similar size and complexity. The costs are also based on having the work completed by private contractors and specialists. It does not take into consideration work that could be performed by County staff, volunteer groups or other means.

The cost figures are intended to be used for budgeting purposes, project phasing, and comparing the relative cost of one item to that of another. The costs are in 2002 dollars. Although intended to be conservative, it should be recognized that actual costs will vary depending on the year that each aspect of the master plan is implemented, economic conditions affecting bidding, and the actual site conditions found in the field during construction.

The cost analysis defines the potential costs associated with each development component of the master plan.

Development Program Cost Projections		
Master Plan Component	General Description of Cost Items Included in Estimate	Cost Estimate (In Dollars)
New Park Drive, Beach/Trailhead Parking Lot	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Rural-section asphalt park drive road, turn lanes and pull-off areas 2) Development of stormwater convenience systems – natural systems and built systems (culverts, storm sewer, etc.) 3) Beach area parking lot (100 spaces) and turnaround with concrete curb (does not include sheltered waiting area, beach drive, or trails) 4) Porous pavement overflow parking area (26 spaces) 5) General roadway signage 6) Miscellaneous roadway-related site amenities 7) Restoration & landscape enhancements 	510,000
Visitor Contact Station	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pave existing parking lot access drive 2) Expand parking lot (additional 20 spaces) 3) New access walks and trails in immediate area 4) Restoration & landscape enhancements 5) Miscellaneous site improvements. 	20,000
Group Picnic Areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Small parking lot paving (asphalt with curb) for Eagle Ridge shelter 2) Restoration & landscape enhancements 3) Miscellaneous enhancements (play structure expansion, additional benches and picnic tables, upgrade basketball court, etc.) 	130,000
Independent Family Picnic Areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Misc. improvements (picnic tables, grills, etc.) 2) Restoration & landscape enhancements 	50,000
Boat Launch Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Asphalt overlay of existing access drive and parking areas 2) New enclosure for portable restrooms 3) Two new fishing piers with universal access 4) Miscellaneous enhancements (walks, benches, picnic tables, etc.) 	50,000
Conference Cottage Expansion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Expand parking and redesign of drop-off/turnaround area 2) Expand cottage (800 s.f.) 3) Miscellaneous enhancements (walks, benches, picnic tables, etc.) 4) Restoration and landscape enhancements 	150,000

Master Plan Component	General Description of Cost Items Included in Estimate	Cost Estimate (In Dollars)
Campground Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Asphalt pavement on drive lanes in R.V. campground area 2) New entrance drive alignment, small parking areas, and access drive to dumpstation (asphalt pavement) 3) Outdoor classroom (small wood stage and wood bench seating for 50-70 people) 4) Expand existing restroom and shower facility 5) Upgrade well and septic system 6) Improved trails through campground that link to larger trail system 7) Relocate and improve dumpstation 8) Miscellaneous enhancements (benches, picnic tables, grills, etc.) 9) Restoration and landscape enhancements 	330,000
Group Multi-Use Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Renovation of historic home 2) Conversion of barn into four-season shelter (3,000 s.f.) 3) Conversion of equipment shed into four-season shelter (2500 s.f.) 4) Restroom facilities (either standalone or within shelters) 5) Parking lot development (asphalt with curb) 6) Porous parking lot development 7) Development of stormwater convenience systems – natural systems and built systems (culverts, storm sewer, etc.) 8) Asphalt/concrete trails and walks 9) Miscellaneous site amenities 10) Utilities (well, septic system, etc.) 11) Restoration & landscape enhancements 	1,200,000
Group Camp Area (with Adventure Course)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Shelter structure with restrooms (does not include pilings) 2) Entrance road and parking lot (asphalt with curb) 3) Overflow parking with porous pavement 4) Camper cabins (10) 5) Utilities (well, septic system, and electric) 6) Adventure course 7) Outdoor lecture area (wooden stage with bench seating for 60) 8) Restoration & landscape enhancements 9) Asphalt trails and walks 10) Misc. improvements (picnic tables, grills, trash containers, etc.) 	450,000

Master Plan Component	General Description of Cost Items Included in Estimate	Cost Estimate (In Dollars)
Beach Area	1) Access drive from upper parking lot to beach area (asphalt with curb) (Note: Upper parking lot is not included under this line item) 2) Parking lot by beach (asphalt with curb) 3) Waiting area at upper and lower parking lots (sitting area, arbor, paving, etc.) 4) Beach building (700-800 s.f.) 5) Beach improvements (lifeguard stations, picnic tables, etc.) 6) Redirect drainage flow from ravine 7) Restoration and landscape enhancements (including stabilizing delta edge/shoreline) 8) Asphalt trail from upper parking lot to beach 9) Concrete walks in beach area 10) Misc. improvements (retaining walls, benches, picnic tables, etc.) 11) Utilities (well, septic system, and electric)	585,000
Multipurpose Trails	1) Trail development (asphalt surfaced) – 3.5 miles at 10' wide 2) Trailhead and trailside amenities (benches, kiosks, etc.) 3) Storm sewer systems (culverts, diversions). 4) Misc. improvements (retaining walls, etc.)	250,000
Nature Trails	1) Trail development/improvements – 7.8 miles of soft-surfaced trail 2) Trailhead and trailside amenities (overlooks, benches, decks, etc.) 3) Footbridges 4) Storm sewer systems (culverts, diversions). 5) Misc. improvements (retaining walls, etc.)	150,000
Maintenance Building	1) General maintenance building upgrades 2) Landscape screening and site restoration	10,000
Signage Program	1) Internal park signage program.	25,000
Total Master Plan Cost Estimate		3,910,000
Professional Fees and Charges (Surveying, Design, Engineering, Etc.) (15%)		586,500
Total Master Plan Cost Estimate and Professional Fees and Charges*		4,496,500

* Contingency is not factored into cost estimate.

Ecological Stewardship Program Cost Projections

Restoration and management of the ecological resources within the park will be a significant cost factor as the master plan is implemented.

Restoration and management of the ecological resources within the park will be a significant cost factor as the master plan is implemented. Since the ecological stewardship program is in its infancy, Washington County Parks does not have any data that could be used for projecting costs associated with ecological restoration and management. Given the circumstances, projecting these costs offers certain practical limitations, especially given the fact that a living environment has many nuances that will take years to completely understand.

Lacking baseline data, a unit-basis cost projection was completed to define the potential cost magnitude of restoring and managing the park's ecological resources. The following provides a breakdown of potential costs for both initial restoration and long-term stewardship. The unit costs were derived from past projects in this region of a similar nature. The cover type categories are limited to those that represent a cross-section of the plant communities that would be restored within the park. The critical difference between each category is the propensity for trees versus grasses, upland versus lowland, and hydrologic and soil variables that affect restoration efforts, timeframes, and costs.

Potential Initial Restoration Costs					
Cover Type	Acres*	Range of Cost/Acre		Total Cost	
Maple-Basswood System	136.74	1,500	to	4,000	205,110 to 546,960
Oak Savanna System	436.26	1,500	to	4,000	654,390 to 1,745,040
Wetland Systems	11.10	1,500	to	3,500	16,650 to 38,850
Total Potential Cost for Remedial Work				876,150	to 2,330,850

Potential Yearly Long-Term Maintenance and Management Costs					
Cover Type	Acres*	Range of Cost/Acre		Total Cost	
Maple-Basswood System	136.74	75	to	150	10,256 to 20,511
Oak Savanna System	436.26	75	to	150	32,720 to 65,439
Wetland	11.10	100	to	200	1,110 to 2,220
Total Potential Cost for <u>Yearly</u> Maintenance Work				44,085	to 88,170

* Acreage does not include developed areas.

As the tables define, the range of potential costs at this level of evaluation is quite broad simply due to the uncertainties of what will be encountered. Since restoration will be extensive, economies of scale may come into play. However, highly disturbed areas that require extensive restoration may exceed the average per acre cost as listed. Note that these cost projections relate to the actual restoration of the native plant communities and do not include any grading and site preparation that may be necessary prior to that activity.

Property Acquisition Cost Projection

The purchase price for the County-owned property that is being proposed for inclusion within the regional park was \$1,130,202 for 208 acres, which averages out to \$5,434 per acre. The purchase was made in 1996.

The acquisition cost for privately-owned property has not been determined since it will be based on cost appraisals and negotiations with the current property owner at the appropriate time. To date, the property owner has given permission to walk the property and consider its inclusion in the regional park. However, there has been no discussion as to the owner's interest in selling the property in any given time frame.

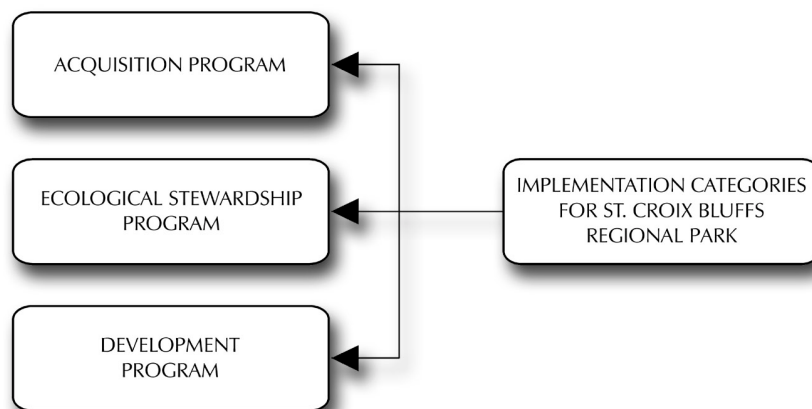
Implementation Strategy and Priorities

Given the magnitude of potential costs, it is expected that implementation of the master plan will be phased in over a period of time to coincide with funding opportunities. The following defines the overall strategy and priorities for master plan implementation.

Implementation Categories

As shown in figure 7.1 on the next page, the implementation plan is broken down into three categories, which reflects the major implementation challenges facing the park

Figure 7.1 – Implementation categories for St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.



The following considers the overall priorities *between* categories, which is followed by discussion related to the priorities *within* each category.

Implementation Priorities Between Categories

Since land acquisition has not been completed, the acquisition program ranks at the top of the implementation priorities.

With respect to the ecological stewardship and development programs, taking a balanced approach to implementation is proposed to ensure that both cultural *and* ecological goals of the master plan are accomplished as implementation occurs in forthcoming years. Under this approach, ecological and physical development concerns will be of relatively equal priority as decisions are made regarding implementation strategies, funding packages, and maintenance and operations budget allocations. A balanced approach also allows priorities within each category to be pursued simultaneously to take advantage of funding opportunities that may arise from various sources. This approach also provides greater flexibility in developing effective implementation sequences that link physical development and ecological restoration objectives together whenever it is advantageous to do so. The following table provides a strategy statement for each of the categories to establish a starting point for developing specific implementation priorities.

Priority	Category	Overall Strategy Statement
1	Acquisition Program	Acquisition of the privately and County-owned lands is the top overall priority since amassing the land is essential to the park's existence.
2 (Equal Priority)	Ecological Stewardship Program	Once acquisition is completed, moving forward on the ecological stewardship program becomes a high priority to begin restoring the park's natural areas, especially transitioning agricultural areas to native systems and forestalling any continued decline in quality of existing native plant communities.
	Development Program	On par with implementing the ecological stewardship program, phased implementation of the development plan becomes a priority to expand recreational and cultural opportunities as defined by the master plan.

By focusing on a balanced implementation approach, the cultural and ecological values of the park will grow in relative equilibrium. However, inherent to the implementation strategy is the need for flexibility to react to the real conditions, circumstances, and opportunities that present themselves. In this context, the greatest utility of the implementation plan is that it provides a framework and starting point for Washington County to develop funding packages and grant applications to achieve the vision for the park as defined by the master plan.

Strategy for Land Acquisition

Reimbursement of the County-owned property can occur after preparation of an agreement between Washington County and the Metropolitan Council. Reimbursement would occur when funds are available through the appropriate funding program.

Acquisition of the privately-owned property is much more of an uncertainty since the land owner ultimately decides on a time frame for selling, assuming that they have an interest in doing so. By adopting the master plan, Washington County and Metropolitan Council will be positioned to react to any opportunity that may arise to purchase the property. Given the uncertain time frame, Washington County, in concert with the Metropolitan Council, will have to be prepared to act quickly on any opportunities that may arise to purchase the property. To this end, it is recommended that Washington County meet with the landowner to formally show an interest in purchasing the property and developing strategies that would appeal to the landowner. Strategies could range from right of first refusal and life estate to phased or outright purchase.

Strategy for Implementing the Development Program

The implementation strategy for the development program follows more traditional routes. In general, future capital improvements will be funded through Metropolitan Council regional park grants. The table on the next page lists the line items defined in the previous cost estimate in order of priority relative to each other. Note that these priorities are not linked to specific implementation time frames since actual project phasing will be a function of demand, opportunity, and funding availability. Note also that these priorities are subject to change in future years. In addition, each priority may require more than one phase to complete.

Priority	Development Component (as defined in Cost Projections)	Comment	Costs (In \$'s)
1	Nature Trails	Serves a fundamental park need.	150,000
2	Multipurpose Trails	Serves a fundamental park need.	250,000
3	Conference Cottage Expansion	Established need that can occur prior to park expansion.	150,000
4	Group Picnic Areas	Established need that can occur prior to park expansion. May fall to a lower priority if land acquisition occurs in the nearer term.	130,000
5	Campground Area	Established need that can occur prior to park expansion. May fall to a lower priority if land acquisition occurs in the nearer term.	330,000
6	New Park Drive	Necessary infrastructure to serve new development areas.	510,000
7	Beach Area	High priority new facility given public demand.	585,000
8	Group Camp Area	Need to replace old site and expand services.	450,000
9	Group Multi-Use Area	Potential to serve a broad constituency and preserve historic farmstead.	1,200,000
10	Boat Launch Area	General upgrading of this area will be needed in the foreseeable future.	50,000
11	Visitor Contact Station	Limited expansion of parking and walks to better serve the public need.	20,000
12	Family Picnic Areas	Simple site enhancement, but not a critical priority.	50,000
13	Maintenance Building	Aesthetic issue that is not as high of a priority as other developments	10,000
--	Signage Program	Would be phased as part of other development packages	25,000
Total Project Costs - All Phases			3,910,000
15% Project Fees and Charges			586,500
Total Project Costs*			4,496,500

* Does not include any contingency

With respect to long-term maintenance of buildings within the park, Washington County Parks has an established operation and maintenance fund that is funded through Washington County. Critical to this funding approach is making sure that the funds needed to maintain development initiatives is provided at the time that a new development occurs.

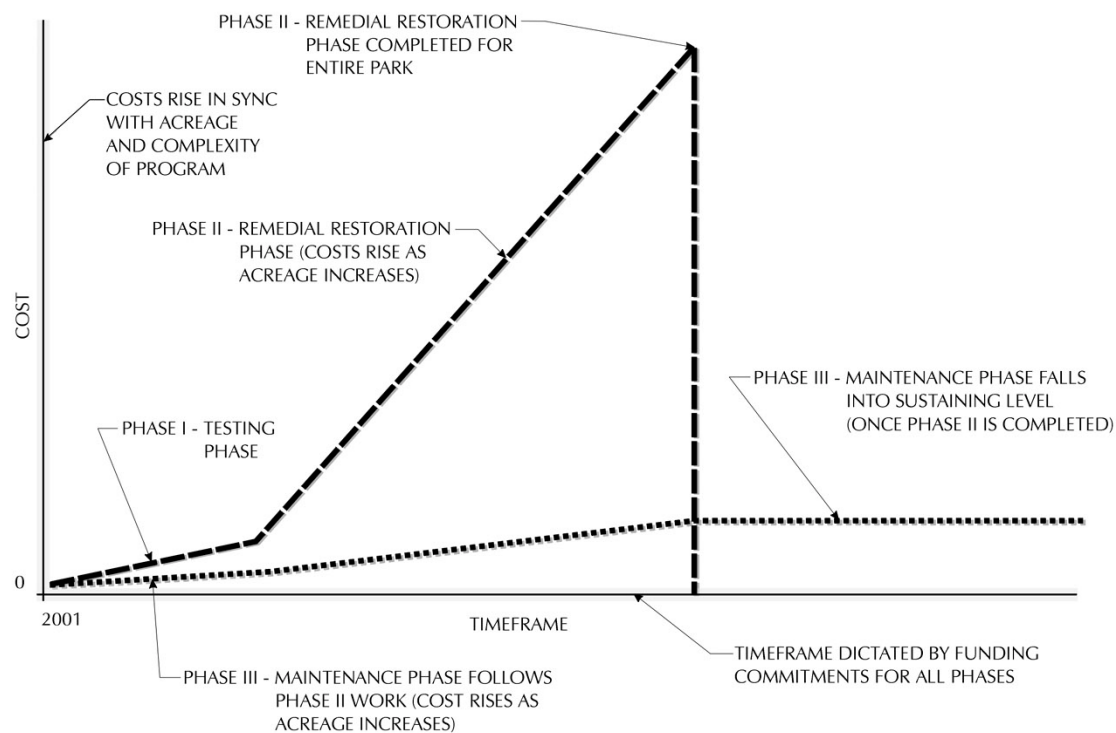
Strategy for Ecological Stewardship Program

Developing and implementing an ecological stewardship program for the park is also a top priority that emerged from the planning process. Although there are numerous acquisition and development initiatives that are high priorities, there is also a sense of urgency to move forward with the stewardship program as well. This is particularly important in that ecological stewardship is a long term issue in which results from near term action will be most appreciated in 10, 20, 50 years hence.

From a funding strategy perspective, the most critical factor is having a perpetual funding source in place for long-term stewardship prior to undertaking the initial restoration activities. Lacking this funding source, gains made during initial restoration can be lost if not followed by prudent management in future years.

With respect to a specific strategy, the funding program for initial restoration needs to be lock-stepped with the other phases of the stewardship program as defined in Section IV. Figure 7.2 provides an overview of how the three phases relate to each other in terms of funding levels needed to support them.

Figure 7.2 – Shifts in funding levels in support of stewardship programs.



The cost for restoring the park's ecological systems far outpaces the costs of taking care of it once that is completed.

As figure 7.2 illustrates, the cost for restoring the park's ecological systems far outpaces the costs of taking care of it once that is completed. Through proper management, the extra costs associated with restoring the park can be largely controlled in the future *as long as the maintenance phase continues indefinitely*. Also, the longer that the park's ecological systems remain in a state of decline before efforts are made to manage it, the more expensive (and scientifically challenging) it will be to restore them. The bottom line is that restoring the park's natural systems to a sustainable level of quality should be done sooner rather than later. The following table provides an overview of the key funding phases associated with the ecological stewardship program.

Implementation Priority	Implementation Focus Recommended Under this Phase	Total Costs (In Dollars)
Priority 1 – Preparation of Technically-Based Stewardship Program	Focus is on building upon the framework presented in the master plan to prepare a detailed stewardship program defining each phase of implementation. This includes a more detailed land cover inventory, refining prototypes, and developing restoration and management strategies for each condition that is found.	15,000 to 30,000
Priority 2 – Controlled Implementation of Stewardship Program	Focus is on implementing the program in a controlled, predictable manner that is supported by funding and scientific know-how.	Increases year-to-year as more acreage is restored (refer to table on page 7.5 for per acre cost projections and Section V for restoration and management strategy)

From a funding strategy standpoint, a typical capital improvement fund is an appropriate approach for funding the restoration phase of the stewardship program. With respect to the long-term management phase, consideration of other approaches may be necessary to ensure a reasonably consistent stream of funds is available to support the program. Two examples of approaches that can serve this need are defined in the following table.

Funding Option	Overview	Advantages	Disadvantages
Ecological Management Fund	Establishment of a fund similar to a building upkeep or maintenance fund that is used for ongoing maintenance of buildings, trails, and so forth within the park. Funding is typically on a year to year appropriation basis as dictated by the County Board in concert with the Metropolitan Council.	Establishes a stand-alone fund for this purpose.	Only as secure as the commitment to contribute to the fund. Leaner economic times or other political directions can create uncertainty in ability to maintain funding levels from year to year, which makes this approach somewhat vulnerable. (Whereas future development initiatives and even building upkeep can be put off in many cases, stewardship of resources requires a sustained commitment to avoid losing ground.)
Ecological Stewardship Endowment Fund	Establishment of an endowment fund for the perpetual maintenance of ecological systems within the park.	Principle investment that is put into the fund is "locked away" and cannot be used for any other purposes. Program is actually supported by the interest generated by the fund in a secure market as dictated by County policy. The advantage of this approach is that the stream of funding available is more assured and predictable. Also, seed money is a one-time investment that keeps on working for the County.	Current enabling laws governing the Metropolitan Council may preclude the use of grant dollars for creating an endowment fund. Washington County may also have governing policies that could affect the use of this approach. Reconsideration of any current limitations would require state-level legislative action.

As the table indicates, the endowment fund offers significant long-term security in ensuring a consistent level of funding from one year to the next. In addition, the endowment could be structured so that a certain percentage of the interest earned each year would be used to build principal, resulting in a larger pot of money to support expansion of the program. Figure 7.3 illustrates this relationship. Figure 7.3 illustrates how the growth of the stewardship fund is linked to the expansion of the stewardship program.

Figure 7.3 – Growth of endowment fund as a percentage of interest is reinvested.

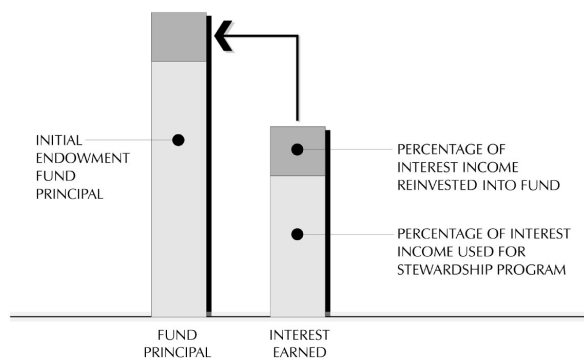
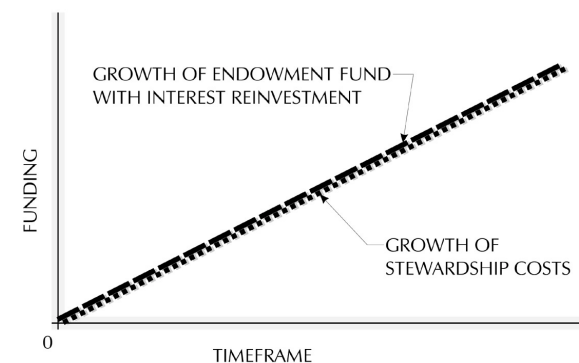


Figure 7.4 – Growth of endowment fund relative to expansion of stewardship program.



Under the framework of the endowment fund as presented, the long-term capital costs for the stewardship program could be *substantially reduced over a pay-as-you-go approach* since the fund generates interest income to support the program, as well as income to reinvestment back into the fund itself. For this reason, the endowment fund option offers a number of distinct advantages that are worthy of consideration in concert with more traditional funding programs.

Public Involvement in Implementing the Master Plan

Washington County is committed to continuing public involvement through the implementation of the master plan.

Washington County is committed to continuing public involvement through the implementation of the master plan. Public involvement and comment will be sought during the design process as specific projects are initiated. In addition, forums for broader public input (e.g., open houses and presentations) would also be used as needed to communicate and exchange ideas with interested citizens.

The objectives associated with involving citizens in the implementation process include:

- ▶ Determine who the stakeholders are and their interest in a particular development initiative.
- ▶ Understand their needs and unique perspectives.
- ▶ Identify and understand concerns and problems.
- ▶ Develop alternatives and find appropriate solutions with input from stakeholders.

In addition, Washington County has an appointed Parks & Open Space Commission that advises the County Board on development initiatives within County parks. The public is welcome to attend its regularly scheduled meetings. Also, Washington County is continuing to develop numerous tools to provide a consistent level of communication with interested citizens. (Refer to the Operations Section below for more detail on these tools.)

Operations Plan and Maintenance Plan

The Washington County Parks Division is charged with the operation of the County's park system, including St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park.

The Washington County Parks Division is charged with the operation of the County's park system, including St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park. The Washington County Board of Commissioners establishes policies and goals for the park system and through an annual budgeting process provides capital and operating funds for parks. The Parks & Open Space Commission, appointed by the County Board of Commissioners, serves as an advisory committee advocate for an improved and enhanced park and trail system in the County. The specific responsibilities of the Parks Commission include:

- ▶ Review proposals and make recommendations concerning park and trail acquisition and development;
- ▶ Review and make recommendations concerning recreation programming, fees for facility use and park use policies;
- ▶ Recommend enhancing natural resources in County parks and regional trail corridors;
- ▶ Provide input into the County Park Policy Plan and Park Master Plans for park development site planning;
- ▶ Perform fact-finding tasks as directed by the County Board.

A copy of the specific wording of the related ordinance is available through Washington County staff.

Ordinances

Public use and enjoyment of the County park system, including St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, is controlled by Ordinance No. 93, Park Ordinance, (the Ordinance) which was last amended on December 12, 2000. The Ordinance incorporates pertinent Minnesota statutes, and addresses the following issues:

- ▶ Regulation of Public Use
- ▶ Regulation of General Conduct
- ▶ Regulations Pertaining to General Parkland Operation
- ▶ Protection of Property, Structures, and Natural Resources
- ▶ Regulation of Recreation Activity
- ▶ Regulation of Motorized Vehicles, Traffic and Parking

A copy of the ordinance is available through Washington County.

Enforcement

Park visitors are informed of park rules and regulations in a variety of ways. Kiosks and signs are strategically located to address specific information about park hours, trails, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, and directions. The Washington County Sheriff's Department responds to emergencies and criminal complaints.

General Operations

The Parks Division has an annual operations and maintenance budget of approximately \$1,750,000 to operate and maintain the County's park system and approximately 12.5 permanent employees. In addition, approximately 62 seasonal employees are hired each year as life guards, maintenance workers and gate attendants.

Washington County's annual report of facts and figures for 2001 reported that 180,000 visits were made to St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park. Planned improvements to the park are expected to increase park use and, therefore, increase revenue. Revenues from the facilities and services at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park total approximately \$78,300, which does not include annual or daily entrance fees.

Maintenance

Maintenance of facilities and lands is essential to protect public investment, enhance natural resource qualities and achieve the County's goals of providing users clean, safe, enjoyable year round park experiences. Washington County Parks Division has a clearly defined maintenance program. Reporting to the Park Director are the Parks Manager and Planner. Reporting to the Parks Manager are the Maintenance Supervisor, Parks Coordinator, and office staff. The Maintenance Supervisor oversees five maintenance workers, 12 seasonal maintenance workers, and six park attendants.

The predominant categories of tasks accomplished by maintenance staff are:

- ▶ Grounds maintenance
- ▶ Building custodial
- ▶ Facility maintenance/repair
- ▶ Equipment maintenance/repair
- ▶ Natural resource management
- ▶ Program support
- ▶ Miscellaneous shop duties
- ▶ Other miscellaneous/unique duties

As defined by the master plan, St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park has a maintenance facility that functions as an equipment and supply storage area. The facility also provides an indoor work area to perform minor vehicle and equipment maintenance, as well as serving as a place to conduct park maintenance operations.

Accomplishing the maintenance needs of St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park is and will continue to be challenging. As park land and facilities are further developed, new or expanded maintenance services will need to be provided. Washington County recognizes the need to remain committed to the maintenance needs of the park and to meet the new needs/priorities identified by the master plan. It is unlikely that existing staff and budget resources will be sufficient. Although increased funding is critical, perhaps even more important is increasing the number of staff. As an example, trail development and natural resource management have an initial cash intensive need, but ultimate success requires hands-on stewardship for many years to achieve desired results. This takes staff with the knowledge and time to commit to this stewardship.

Traditional and non-traditional funding and staffing sources will have to be pursued to meet the maintenance needs of the park and the master plan objectives.

Outreach and Marketing

Washington County continues to expand its outreach effort, in an effort to improve public awareness of its park facilities, programs, and services. This outreach effort has various components, including the following:

Printed Materials: Washington County has developed and distributes on a regular basis brochures and maps, including park maps and picnic, camping, and other brochures. Park fliers are also distributed to County departments, libraries, community agencies, and other contacts throughout the community.

Electronic Communication: Washington County has a web page to inform citizens about the County's functions and services (e.g., Park Commission meetings, the master planning process, park facilities, and programs). In addition, the public can contact the Parks office through the County's e-mail system.

Other Outreach: Other forms of outreach and marketing include displays at the Washington County Fair, articles in the County Commissioners' quarterly newspaper, the production of flyers and brochures and the display of information at County Service Centers and park kiosks. The County also publishes news releases and advertisements in local community and metropolitan area newspapers that highlight upcoming programs and facility openings. The County also promotes park use through feature articles and presentations to other County departments and local agencies.

Marketing Initiatives: Washington County will be developing a comprehensive marketing plan to increase public awareness, understanding, and use of park facilities, services and programs. In addition, the marketing plan will identify the need to expand and diversify marketing and communication efforts to advance park use by minority populations and special needs groups.