

A WORLD-CLASS PARK



Des Moines County Conservation

BIG HOLLOW MASTER PLAN 2021



Big Hollow Recreation Area | A Des Moines County Park

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Take a moment to think back on your life. What comes to mind? What images flash across your mind's eye? What feelings well up when you call those memories forward?

Go ahead. Take a minute. We'll wait...



Our memories define us

If you're like most people, you likely came up with a series of images in your mind and at least some, if not most of them, were based outdoors and with other people – people that were, or are, very important to you.

Whether we know it or not, those core memories influence who we are, what we value, and the things we choose to do in our daily lives. *Our past experiences shape our current and future selves.*

*It's
different
now*

No matter how old you are, the world is different today than it was when you were a kid. Technology has advanced at unprecedented rates. It has infiltrated nearly every aspect of our lives. More people live in urban centers than ever before.

Our disconnect from nature, and the host of problems and ailments it causes, has become so profound that it's practically diagnosable. We call it...



NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER



That disconnect, that lack of time spent outdoors, has become such an epidemic that even the healthcare industry has taken note. In many places, doctors have begun literally prescribing time outdoors as treatment for a host of maladies including obesity, anxiety, depression, PTSD, and others.

What's more, science supports the validity of what we all intuitively know. A growing body of research suggests that time spent outdoors, especially in natural settings, offers health benefits that, in some cases, is more effective than pharmaceuticals.

This plan is our attempt to be part of that solution.



Des Moines County Conservation



At Des Moines County Conservation, we refuse to accept a world where kids' interaction with nature is through a screen. Instead, we aspire to create a place close to home that's so compelling, that offers so much, that families can't resist the urge to go there. Repeatedly.

We aspire to create a...

WORLD-CLASS PARK

...right here in Des Moines County.

The ideas in this document are not just upgrades to a county park. They are our answer to the epidemic of outdoorlessness facing today's families. They are our prescription for a better life, for lasting memories, for stronger families, for a more nature-connected society.

For decades now, our plan has been to create a park where families can go to lose themselves for a weekend outdoors. A place free from the distractions of everyday life and full of opportunity to play outside where families can make the kind of life-defining memories that are so important for so many reasons.

That's the kind of place we intend to create at Big Hollow. This is how we will do it.

BIG HOLLOW MASTER PLAN KEY ELEMENTS



IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY

Paved roads, trails, and lake accesses to the beach and fishing sites; improved boat ramp and docks; accessibility to all buildings

IMPROVED/EXPANDED FEATURES

More campsites; expanded and improved trail system; expanded maintenance capacity and improved maintenance facilities



NEW FACILITIES

Lakefront cabins; new maintenance building; Park Office & Outdoor Learning Center facility



CLEAN WATER

Completion of a federally approved watershed plan; implementation of practices to reduce nutrient runoff resulting in less algae and better water quality in the lake



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ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Surfacing and accessible design will ensure that even those with mobility restrictions can access the park's great features. Among many improvements, the boat ramp at the lake will be redesigned to reduce its steepness; improved-surface paths, sidewalks and pavement will extend to the beach and fishing jetties; boat docks will allow for easy access to watercraft; and the new cabins and park headquarters will be designed for full accessibility.





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EXPANDED CAMPING

Big Hollow already has one of the most popular campgrounds in the region. As the park's popularity and the RV industry continues to grow, so does the demand for campsites at Big Hollow.



CAMPGROUND
FULL

Every summer, we turn away scores of campers due to the campground being full.

We will add more campsites to the park by making use of existing infrastructure and expanding the campground by up to 50%.



MORE
CAMPSITES





These four-season cabins will feature all the amenities of home with the rustic feel of a faraway wilderness retreat.

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LAKEFRONT CABINS

Each cabin will offer an expansive deck for watching sunsets, a boat dock providing direct access to the water, and a patio area for campfires and s'more roasting with the family.

The cabins will be built in pairs with a common area in between so extended family groups can rent them together. Yet each cabin will have its own private patio area for those times when only one is needed and they're rented separately.



CLEAN WATER



With so much of the park's use centered around water recreation, the quality of that water must be a key focus in any master plan.

We will complete a federally approved watershed plan and work with both public and private partners to do what it takes inside and outside the park to make and keep the lake clean.



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PARK HEADQUARTERS + OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER

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Looking like something you'd find at a national park, this multi-purpose facility will serve as the gateway to Big Hollow park. The upstairs will be the new department headquarters and park office. The downstairs and outdoor area in back will be an outdoor learning center where we'll host programs to connect park guests to all the activities the park offers.





NEW PARK HEADQUARTERS



Downstairs Classrooms



PAVED ROADS + IMPROVED TRAILS



The main park road will be paved just like in any national or state park. Kids will be able to ride bicycles around the campground and down to the beach. Pavement will continue onto some of the main trail segments, campsites, and lake accesses. Among other trail improvements, the Flint River Trail will be extended around the lake to connect to all the amenities on the north side of the park.





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WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS

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Maintaining a World-Class Park requires world-class maintenance staff and facilities. We've been building our staffing infrastructure for the past several years. Now, as part of this master plan, we will construct a new maintenance facility to house the park staff, supplies, and equipment needed to maintain the park to World-Class Standards.

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Together, the elements in this ambitious plan will cost nearly

\$10 million
over the next
10 years

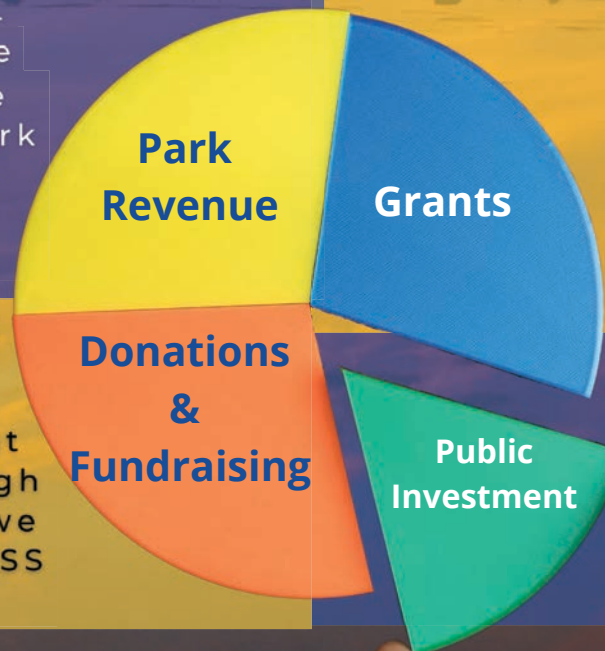
Timeline:

Funding will dictate how soon these projects happen. Your contributions will accelerate the pace at which Big Hollow transforms into a **WORLD-CLASS PARK.**



Big Hollow is a self-sustaining park. The user fees paid there go back into the park to cover operations and future development.

Community support built the park into what it is today. We're confident that will continue through this next phase as we build a **WORLD-CLASS PARK** together.



Park revenue will be used to leverage various state and federal grants. We expect revenue and grants to cover more than 1/2 of the total costs.

A small portion will come from annual department operational budgets or possibly a county bond or other investment.

Are you ready to help build a World-Class Park?
See how you can contribute at: www.DMCconservation.com



**Des Moines County
Conservation**

Our Mission

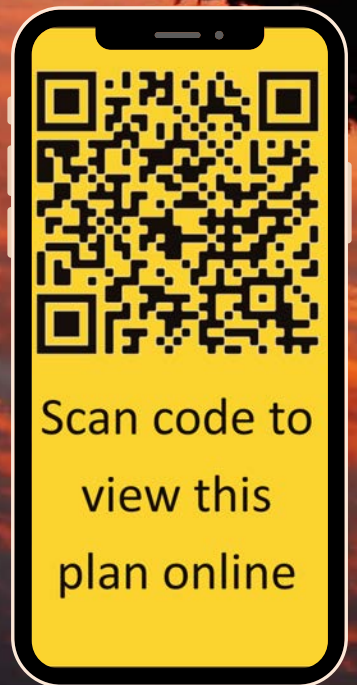
Des Moines County Conservation is dedicated to the sustainability of natural resources through land stewardship, conservation education, and by providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities.

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PARTNERS *for*
CONSERVATION

Tax-deductible donations may be made to these projects through the Partners for Conservation Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization that supports park and conservation efforts in Des Moines County.



For more information, contact:

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