

**ANNUAL REPORT – 2005**



**STEARNS COUNTY  
PARKS**

**STEARNS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Larry Haws – District 1  
Mark Sakry – District 2  
Vince Schaefer – District 3  
Leigh Lenzmeier – District 4  
Donald Otte – District 5

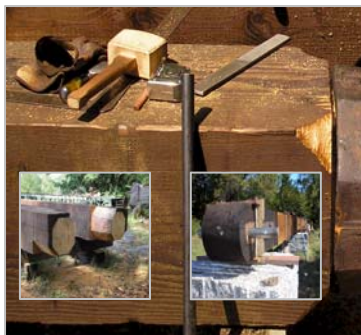
**STEARNS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION**

Prentiss Foster – District 1  
Jim Graeve – District 2  
John Peck – District 3  
Ed Bouffard – District 4  
Joan Bredeck – District 5  
Lowell Olson – Planning Commission Member  
Mark Sakry – County Commissioner Member

**STEARNS COUNTY PARKS STAFF**

James Burke, Park Maintenance II  
Christine Flugga, Quarry Park Caretaker  
LeRoy Gapinski, Park Maintenance II  
Paul Wirth, Park Maintenance Coordinator  
Wendy Hute, Technical Assistant II  
Peter Theismann, Park Operations Coordinator  
Charles Wocken, Park Director

Report submitted by: Charles B. Wocken



Front Cover:

Large background photo of hand tools used to custom fit old hardware onto the new timbers.

Left inset: Mast & Boom ends being handcrafted to receive antique hardware

Right Inset: Contoured end of Boom arm and new hinge pin.

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## **PLANNING:**

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF STEARNS COUNTY:**

*The mission of the County of Stearns is to provide quality public services as determined by law and citizen needs, through innovative leadership and the teamwork of its people, officials, and employees. Services shall be provided in a fair, respectful, and professional manner consistent with available human, natural, and economic resources.*

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF PARK DEPARTMENT:**

*To secure sufficient outdoor recreation area and open space, and conserve the natural resources of the County (features which make Stearns County a pleasant place to live); to maintain parks to be safe, scenic and functional for the public; and to maintain all support facilities and equipment.*

### **2005 OBJECTIVES:**

<b>2005 Budget Objectives</b>
1. Construct Lake Wobegon trail extension from the City of Holdingford to the Morrison County line.
2. Move in and organize operations within Operation & Maintenance Center.
3. Apply for grant to purchase HONOR WOODS.
4. Continue implementation of Comprehensive Plan.

**OFFICERS:** Ed Bouffard was re-elected as chair and Joan Bredeck was re-elected as vice-chair.

**STAFF RECOGNITION BY COUNTY BOARD:** Pete Theismann was the winner of the Stearns County **Customer Service Award**. Pete had won a county-wide award in 2004 also.

**PARKLAND DEDICATION:** Following the passage of a state statute Ordinance 334 instituted the parkland dedication fee as part of the County subdivision process. The Ordinance established a \$1000/lot fee for plats of 3 lots or more. The fee was capped at 10% of the raw land value. For plats of 1 or 2 lots a fee of \$250/lot was assessed. A combination of land and fee is an option the County Board can consider. The park director will make recommendations for each plat forwarded him from Environmental Services. By the end of 2005 about \$7750 had been collected through the parkland dedication fee.

**TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT GRANT:** The Park Commission approved the application for federal Transportation Enhancement funds through the APO. The project submitted was for the Lake Wobegon Trail from St. Joseph to the Mississippi River. The Cities of Waite Park & St. Cloud were partners in the application. Three phases were identified. Both cities earmarked local funds to assist in financing the local share of the project.

**LAKE KORONIS RECREATION TRAIL:** The County Board transferred \$80,000 from the county Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) from the “Forgotten Four” trail segment to the Koronis Trail. The CIP contained funding that was duplicated by grant awards received from the State of MN and the Federal Transportation Bill reauthorization High Priority Project program for the same segment of trail.

**AVON HILLS STATE SCIENTIFIC & NATURAL AREA (SNA):** 251 acres east of the City of Avon and abutting the north side of the Wobegon Trail was acquired for \$1.6 million (\$6,378/acre). This is the first acquisition for the AVON HILLS SNA. There is a northern unit identified, of which this 261 is a portion, and the southern unit, which lies south of I-94 and east of Co. Rd. 9 in Collegeville & Avon Townships.

**“GREATER METRO REGIONAL PARKS” - STATEWIDE FUNDING INITIATIVE:** The Twin Cities Metro area is trying to get \$500-\$700 million for the next 30 years dedicated to the Metro Regional Park and Open Space Commission to acquire 17,000 acres. Met Council estimates there will be another 1.4 million people by 2030. They need Greater Minnesota’s support to accomplish the goal. Mr. Wocken estimated Greater Minnesota would need about \$50-\$60 million for Stearns County capital needs over that same period

**ROCKVILLE COUNTY PARK:** John & Linda Peck offered to donate 200 acres of their property for the establishment of this park along the Sauk River in the city limits of Rockville. The donation was contingent on the purchase of the adjoining 94 acres east of the Peck site and west of Rockville’s Eagle Park. The Park Commission moved unanimously, with John Peck abstaining, to support a grant application to acquire the 294 acres of property.

**BREDECK CROSSING ON THE WOBEGON TRAIL:** At its December meeting, the Park Commission approved recognizing the crossing at the south end of the Bredeck farm which was missed in the design and inventory due to the changing property swaps for the trail re-routing at that location.

**DISC GOLF AT MISSISSIPPI RIVER PARK:** At its November meeting the Park Commission reviewed the disc golf program following its three-year trial. The review included a public meeting. The Park Commission recommended that the County Board institutionalize the activity as part of the recreation program of Mississippi River County Park.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:** The House of Representatives Committee on Capital Improvements and the State Senate Committee on Capital Improvements visited Stearns County and reviewed bonding requests of the Central MN Regional Parks & Trails Coordination Board, which included the Kraemer Lake Site acquisition in Stearns County, the EXCEL Trail development in Sherburne County, and the development of River Bluffs park in St. Cloud. (Only the EXCEL Trail ended up receiving funding through the bonding bill in 2006.) Stearns County Parks has been the staff for the regional park effort.

**LOTTERY-IN-LIEU STATE FUNDING – EXPLANATION:** A note from Rep. Knobloch described the details the breakdown of lottery funds. Since the start of lottery sales in 1990, the legislature imposed an “in-lieu-of-sales tax” on lottery tickets. This 6 1/2% tax is paid directly by the Lottery to the state treasury and is part of the regular lottery ticket purchase price. Prior to the start of fiscal year 2000, this money was allocated to the general fund where it was commingled with other sources of revenue such as the income tax and regular sales tax. Beginning on July 1, 2000, revenues from this tax were partially redirected to several environmental programs. The breakdown for 2004 was as follows: 36% (\$9,180,000) to the Game and Fish Fund, 16.3% (\$4,099,000) to the state parks and trails, 16.3% (\$4,099,000) for metropolitan area parks and trails. 2% (\$546,000) for trails operated by local governments, 1% (\$546,000) to the Minnesota Zoo, Como Zoo and Duluth Zoo. Local parks and non-metro regional parks are attempting to become part of that funding formula

**LAKE KORONIS PARK:** Koronis Park did not receive their grant for the 3 camping cabins and the play structure. The Minnesota Department of Health Inspector looked at the existing shower building, and said the county needed to install an impervious sealed flooring. Our budget for the grant match was \$10,000. The flooring will cost \$9,000. Stearns County will have to take our share (around \$4,500) and apply it to fixing the shower floor. The Park Commission recommended transferring the budget programmed for the grant match toward funding 50% of the flooring project.

**TRAIL DAY AT QUARRY PARK:** Bryon Marketon, park intern set up a public “trail day” on Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 pm- 8:00 pm. Visitors were able to explore the park on their own, or take a 4-1/2 mile guided hike.

**LAKE WOBEGON TRAIL: SAUK CENTRE/TODD COUNTY LINE (PHASE 3-B):** A public open house was conducted June 21, 2005 by Park Staff in Sauk Centre for the “Forgotten Four” segment of the trail. About 15 people showed up. Everyone was in favor of extending the trail from Sauk Centre to the Todd County line.

**BUDGET REVIEW FOR 2006:** The Commission reviewed the budget proposed by the park director. The Objectives recommended were:

1. Design and construct Lake Wobegon trail extension from Sauk Centre to the Todd county Line.
2. Continue purchases of trail right-of-way for the Beaver Island Trail extension.
3. Facilitate Sauk River frontage preservation near Rockville.
4. Continue work with TPL on the Kraemer Lake woods site purchase.
5. Continue implementation of Comprehensive Plan.
6. Extension of the Wobegon Trail to St. Cloud.

Line items and capital expenditures were also reviewed and recommended to the County Board.

**FEES FOR 2006:** The Park Commissioners reviewed the fees and trends after fee changes in recent years. They recommended to the County Board that the fee for the Open Air Shelter at Warner Lake be raised \$10 and all other fees remain the same.

**ABELN HOUSE LIFE ESTATE RELINQUISHED :** The Abelns have moved out of the house at Warner Lake Park. The life estate had been entered into in 1986. Parks staff worked up a sketch of the floor plan. It could be a rentable building. The County purchased the appliances. The Park Commission scheduled a meeting at the home so they could inspect it. Staff made preliminary proposals for uses of the building.

**SPORT SCUBA DIVING AT QUARRY PARK :** The Park Commission recommended that the County Board set up a Citizen Advisory Committee to report to the County Board recommendations on public access to certain quarries for sport scuba diving. This action was taken after local divers presented a request to the Park Commission at its April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **ACQUISITION:**

**BEAVER ISLAND TRAIL:** Stearns County closed on 8.5 acres (2/3 mile) of former rail corridor in the northern part of Lynden Township for the extension of this trail. This parcel was known as the Reed Site. A grant of approximately \$12,500 from the State of Minnesota was earmarked to help reimburse the county. The purchase price of the property was \$35,000.

### **STEARNS COUNTY PARK ACREAGE DISTRIBUTION DECEMBER 31, 2005 COMMISSIONER DISTRICT**

<b>PARK NAME</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Mississippi River County Park			230		
Warner Lake County Park				241	
Upper Spunk Lake County Park			7		
St. Martin Canoe Access					1
Oak Township Park Site					32
Two Rivers Lake Park Site					56
Lake Sylvia Wayside and Access					3
Spring Hill County Park					82
<del>Richmond River Wayside</del>			8		
Lake Koronis Regional Park (partial)					42
Quarry Park & Nature Preserve		643			
Heims Mill Canoe Access		1			
Fairhaven Mill (not owned by Stearns)				5	
Miller Landing		6			
Lake Wobegon Trail (Leased) size adjusted 30' width managed		15	29		90
Soo Line Rail Corridor			84		401
Beaver Island Trail				18	
<b>Acreage</b>	0	665	350	264	707
<b>TOTAL ACREAGE</b>	<b>1986</b>				

Figure 1

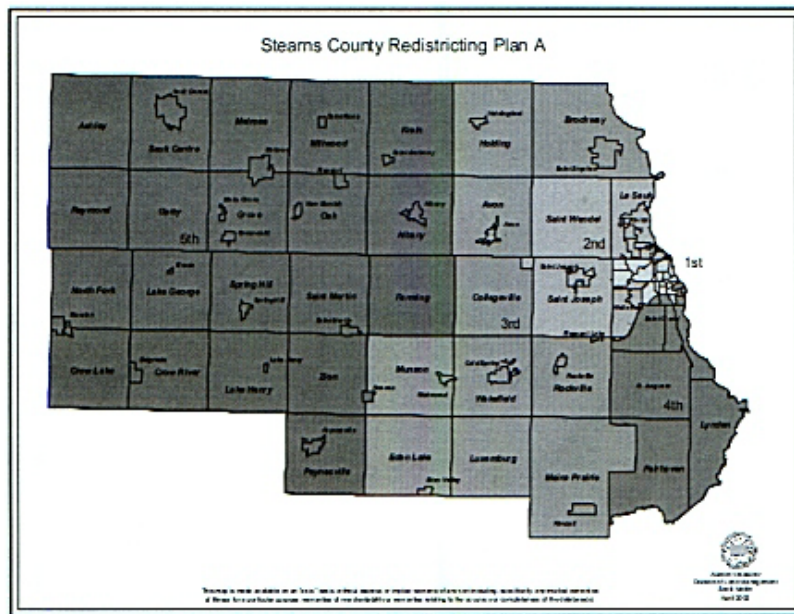


Figure 2, Stearns County Commissioner Districts

## **DEVELOPMENT:**

**VOLUNTEER PROJECTS:** Boy scouts: Planted seedlings; built and installed 4 benches along Wobegon Trail; built information kiosks; built bluebird houses and installed them at Two Rivers Park.

**LAKE KORONIS REGIONAL PARK:** Two small vault toilets were installed in each of the small shelter areas. A volunteer campground host was added to staffing.

**LAKE WOBEGON TRAIL Holdingford to Morrison County Line:** Blacktopping was completed November 9, 2005 for this 3.6-mile segment. Construction completion will occur in the spring of 2006.

## **MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS:**

Summer maintenance activities included mowing, rodent control, noxious weed control, forest management, prairie management, building maintenance and repair, grounds maintenance and improvements, trail maintenance, public safety inspections, and a host of other activities related to the hospitality mission of county parks.

### *Quarrying artifacts refurbished and installed*



### *Prairie Burn at Quarry Park*



### *Stonecutter Monument base Construction*



**LAKE KORONIS REGIONAL PARK:** This park is owned and operated through a Joint Powers Agreement. Meeker County provides the supervision and shares costs 50/50 with Stearns County.

**FAIRHAVEN MILL:** The Park Department continued its cooperation with Wright County in the maintenance of this site. Supervision is provided by Wright County. Though the property is owned by Wright County it resides mostly in Stearns County. Costs are shared 50/50 with Wright County.

**GRANT-IN-AID SNOWMOBILE & SKI TRAILS:** There are about 600 miles of groomed snowmobile trails in Stearns County which are maintained for public usage by the Stearns County Snowmobile Association. The 6-mile Wildwood Ski Trail is groomed and maintained by a similar agreement with the Nordic Ski Club. The trails are established by a permit from the private landowner to Stearns County with the Club or Association providing the day-to-day care. Dedicated trail funds are provided by the State for the maintenance of the trails.

**“CENTURY FARM” SIGNS FOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY:** Park maintenance continued to supply wooden signs for this History Museum program. Eleven signs were constructed.

**STAFFING:**

- 3 permanent park maintenance staff
- 1 permanent Quarry Park caretaker
- 2 park maintenance aides
- 4 seasonal caretakers
- 3 gatekeepers
- 4 Green View, Inc. contract caretakers/attendants at Warner Lake

**VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY**

- Ski Patrol at Quarry Park (47 Volunteers) ..... 152 hours
- Ski Patrol at Warner Lake (19 Volunteers) ..... 56 hours
- Ski Patrol at Mississippi (17 Volunteers) ..... 44 hours
- Quarry Park fence clearing (15 Volunteers) ..... 15 hours
- Quarry Park cleanup & trail trimming (36 Volunteers) ..... 201 hours
- Lake Wobegon Train cleanup (45 Volunteers) ..... 198 hours
- Mississippi County Park cleanup (2 Volunteers) ..... 4 hours
- Warner Lake County Park cleanup (13 Volunteers) ..... 57 hours
- Monitoring Lake Wobegon Trail (5 Volunteers) ..... 70 hours
- Bluebird House Construction at Two Rivers Park (10 Volunteers) ..... 62.5 hours
- Tree Transplanting from Warner Park to Two Rivers (20 Volunteers) ..... 85.5 hours
- Tree Transplanting from Warner Park to Miller Landing (15 Volunteers) ..... 82 hours
- Tree Planting Wobegon Trail (48 Volunteers) ..... 205 hours
- Information Kiosks on Lake Wobegon Trail (10 Volunteers) ..... 151 hours
- Trail Research (1 Volunteer) ..... 4 hours
- Wobegon Trail head improvements (15 Volunteers) ..... 200 hours
- Wobegon Trail Bench Construction (12 Volunteers) ..... 120 hours
- Sauk River Snag removal (2 Volunteers) ..... 8 hours

**TOTAL VOLUNTEERS = 330**

**TOTAL HOURS = 1715**

## **FUNDING:**

### **OVERALL COUNTY BUDGET:**

STEARNS COUNTY'S TOTAL BUDGET \$90,396,111

### **PARK DEPARTMENT BUDGET:**

PARK DEPARTMENT BUDGET with State Aids (Fund 18) \$ 1,638,662

DEBT SERVICE FOR PARK BOND (Fund 35)

(includes 1999 bond, Maint. Bldg. & 2002 \* 2005 projects)

823,000

Total Park Budget \$ 2,461,662

### **PROPERTY TAX FOR PARK PROGRAM:**

PARK FUND LEVY \$ 638,662

DEBT SERVICE ALLOCATION \$ 823,000

Total Property Tax levy for Parks \$ 1,461,662

The most current county populations estimate is for 2004 at 140,841 residents. ***The 2005 cost of the Stearns County Park program was \$10.38/capita.*** The last bond payment for the 1999 Park Bond is due Dec. 1, 2013. The cost of the new Maintenance & Operation Center has been added to the costs because of its location with a regional park.

### **GRANTS & DONATIONS:** *(Over \$1 million grants award to Stearns County Park sin 2005.)*

- An anonymous benefactor donated \$30,000 toward Derrick Restoration.
- Jerry McCarter donated \$1,000 to Quarry Park on behalf of his wife's birthday. Mr. McCarter also inquired about donating \$1 million to the interpretive center. ***The Park Commission recommended that if someone donated \$1 million to the Interpretive Center, they would be given primary naming rights for the entire building. Smaller, venue donation amounts will be determined later.***
- Wobegon Trail: Sauk Centre to Todd County line received an award of \$220,000 from the State Bonding for construction and is available until December 2007.
- Stearns County received \$281,600 for "The Forgotten 4" (Sauk Centre to Todd County line) through the Federal Highway Reauthorization Bill High Priority Project process. That matches the \$220,000 from STATE BONDING as well as the county bond.
- The County was awarded \$500,000 from the Omnibus Environmental bill through the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources for Kraemer Lake Woods property. The grant is available through June 30, 2008.
- The County received \$10,000 from Liberty Savings Bank. Their name was added to the "Blaster Level" on the Quarry Park donor sign. A certificate was created reflecting this, and presented to them.
- The County received \$2,500 from Bauerly Bros. Inc. for the Derrick.

**TAX FORFEIT PROPERTY SALES REVENUE:** Amount generated was \$6,600

**PARKLAND DEDICATION FEE:** Amount generated since inception on July 12 was \$7,750.

**FEE SCHEDULE:**

Shelter Permits.....	\$40.00/day (\$50/day at Warner Open Air) when no caretaker on duty
Monday-Thursday.....	\$45.00/day (\$55/day at Warner Open Air) when caretakers on duty.
Friday-Saturday.....	\$50.00/day (\$60/day at Warner Open Air) when caretakers on duty.
Nature Center Rental.....	\$.50 per person deposit. 50% surcharge for weddings. \$100.00/first four hours. \$ 20.00/hour each additional hour. (50% discount for nonprofits first four hours)
Quarry Park & Nature Preserve Permits.....	\$4.00 Daily \$14.00 Annual
Bus Parking Permit.....	\$15.00/daily. Pre-approved school groups free parking.

Stearns County Parks  
Annual Report 2005

**2005 Budget Performance Report as of 2/28/06**

<u>Account Number</u> & <u>Description</u>	<u>Account Classifications</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>	<u>Account Number</u> & <u>Description</u> <u>Unallocated</u> <u>as to Parks</u>	<u>Account Classifications</u>	
18-541-485	35 - Services & Charges	<u>\$3,546.64</u>		35 - Services & Charges	
Fair Haven	<u>Program Totals</u>	<u>\$3,546.64</u>		Telephone Admin Costs	\$6,355.69
Mill Park				Postage	\$717.31
18-541-486	35 - Services & Charges	<u>\$61,103.30</u>		Printing & Publishing	\$2,820.56
Lake Koronis	<u>Program Totals</u>	<u>\$61,103.30</u>		Advertising	\$28.00
18-541-495	35 - Services & Charges			Dues	\$445.00
Quarry Park & Nature Preserve	Professional, Contractual	\$2,602.25		Subscriptions	\$232.60
	Rental Expenses	\$1,029.36		Utilities	\$4,842.07
	Insurances	\$171.01		Professional, Contractual	\$8,464.98
	Repair & Maintenance	<u>\$3,238.06</u>		IS Charges	\$16,100.69
	<b>Total</b>	<u>\$7,040.68</u>		Repairs & Maintenance	\$15,331.73
	<b>45 - Supplies</b>			Mileage	\$2,905.53
	Sup/Op. Exp.	\$317.91		Training & Conference Expense	\$1,950.15
	<b>55 - Capital Outlay</b>			Professional, Meeting Expense	\$712.82
(Land Acquisition is through Park Bond)	Land, Site Acquisition & Improvements	\$31,098.65		Rental Expenses	\$1,897.62
	<u>Program Totals</u>	<u>\$38,457.24</u>		Real Estate Taxes	\$786.67
18-541-497	<u>Account Classifications</u>	<u>YTD Expenses</u>		Service Agreements	-\$205.62
Lake Wobegon	35 - Services & Charges			Permits & Licenses	\$63.00
	Prt. & Publ.	\$343.80		Insurances	\$15,580.42
	Professional Contractual	35.00		MNT SPEC. PROJ.	<u>\$6,287.76</u>
	Repair & Maintenance	18,358.49		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$85,316.98</b>
	<b>45 - Supplies</b>			<b>45 - Supplies</b>	
	Supplies	\$72.42		Supplies/Operating Expenses	\$33,025.79
	LND/ACQ/IM	<u>\$79,943.05</u>		Durable Supplies	\$0.00
	<u>Program Totals</u>	<u>\$98,752.76</u>		Fuel & Lubricants	\$12,586.45
18-541-499	Salaries, Permanent	\$217,991.94		Books-Videos	\$24.44
Unallocated as to Parks	Salaries, Part Time	\$56,662.84		Office Supplies	<u>\$354.31</u>
	Contracted Personnel	\$43,695.96		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$45,990.99</b>
	Salaries Over Time	\$1,634.41		<b>55 - Capital Outlay</b>	
	Longevity	\$3,572.09		Office Tech Equipment	\$2,360.00
	VAC/SICK/PTO	\$31,650.22		Land Site Acquisition & Improvements Building Acquisitions & Improvements	\$5,776.73
	Flex Plan Contributions	\$52,535.00		Machine AU-Eq	\$41,096.96
	Pera	\$15,320.49		<b>Total</b>	<u>\$49,233.69</u>
	Medicare	\$4,682.78		<b>Program Totals</b>	<b>\$644,279.83</b>
	FICA	\$20,022.89	18-541-597	<b>25 - Personal Service</b>	
	Life Insurance	\$382.50	Park	Per Diems	<u>\$1,225.00</u>
	Holiday	\$13,655.19	Board	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,225.00</b>
	Uniform Allowance	\$0.00		<b>35 - Services &amp; Charges</b>	
	Severence	\$656.60		Professional Meeting Expense	\$350.86
	EE/ALL/REI	<u>\$845.00</u>		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$350.86</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$463,738.17</b>		<u>Program Totals</u>	<u>\$1,575.86</u>
				<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$847,715.63</b>

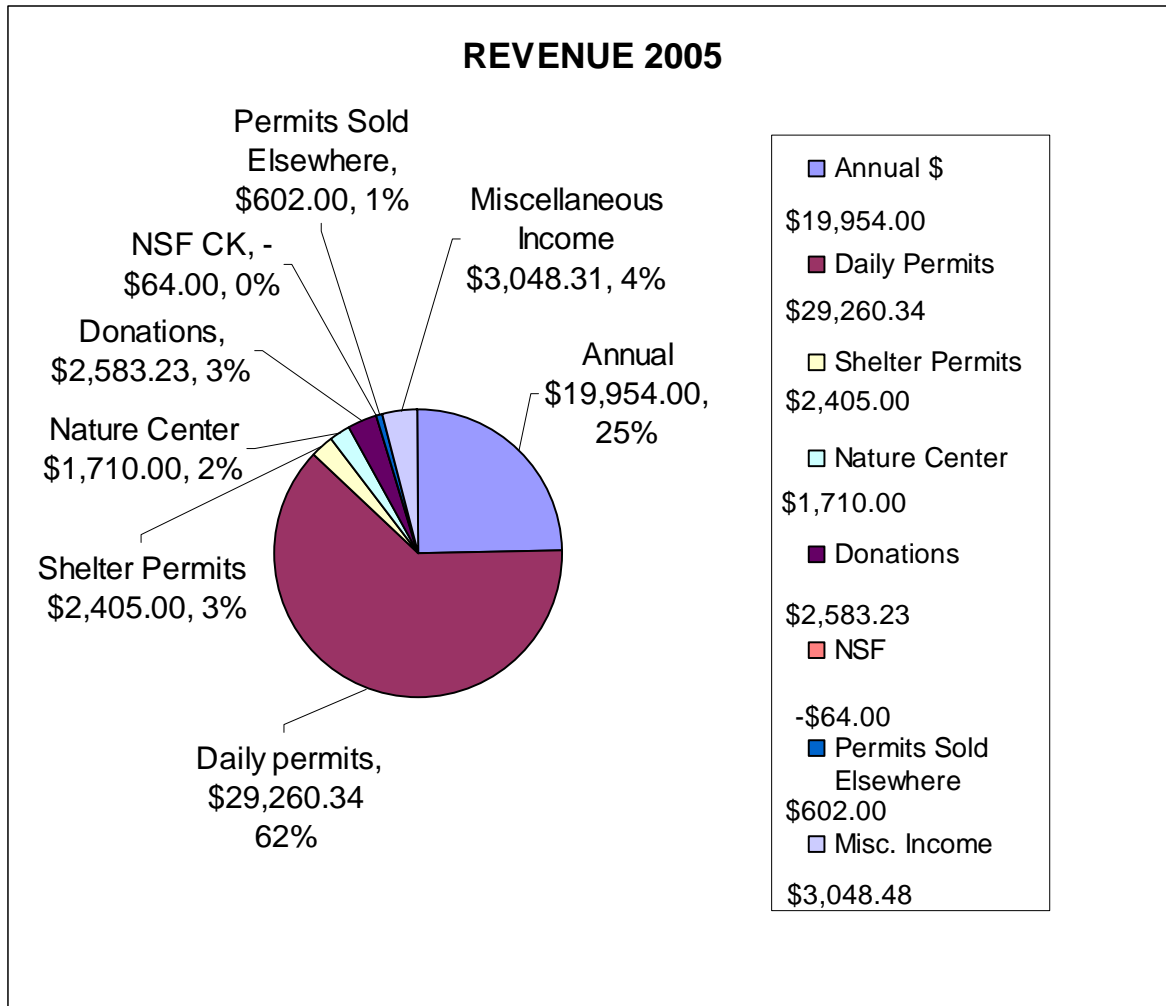


FIGURE 3

**TOTAL REVENUE:** \$ 59,797.88 (\$48,796.12 in 2004)

Daily Parking Permit Revenue:

2004: \$22,346.70/5,586.daily permits

2005: \$29,260.34/7,301 daily permits

Annual Parking Permit Revenue:

2004: \$17,028.00/1,211 annual permits

2005: \$19,954.00/1,422 annual permits

Total Parking Revenue:

2004: \$39,374.70/6,797 total

**2005: \$49,214.34/8,723 total**

## **USERSHIP:**

**ROCK CLIMBING PERMITS:** 74 individual sport climbing permits were issued in 2005.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS AT PARK/TRAIL EVALUATION BOXES & ONLINE:**

Warner Lake County Park: *“Warner Lake has something for everyone. I was out for a run this morning and saw little children near the beach (with parents) and older people walking the trails. The ski group does a great job with the X-ski trails, as well.”*

Wobegon Trail: *“Nice trail. Didn’t know that you can bike so well in the U.S.”* Ludwig Hann, Berlin, Germany

### **PARK RESERVATION SUMMARIES & GRAPHS:**

The Park Department tracks some trends in facility usage from year to year, such as numbers of different groups reserving different facilities, types of groups using facilities, and number of days reserved in each park.

Over a three-year period the number of groups and number of reservation days declined at the general areas for Warner Lake County Park. There has been some decline in number of groups using the Nature Center at Warner Lake over the last three years also but the days of reservations have been stable. The number of groups using the group campsite at Warner increased though the number of days of reservations has remained stable.

Use of Mississippi River Park facilities has been stable over the last three years. A major increase of Quarry Park & Nature Preserve days of reservations has occurred even though there was a decline in the number of different groups receiving permits for activities within the park.

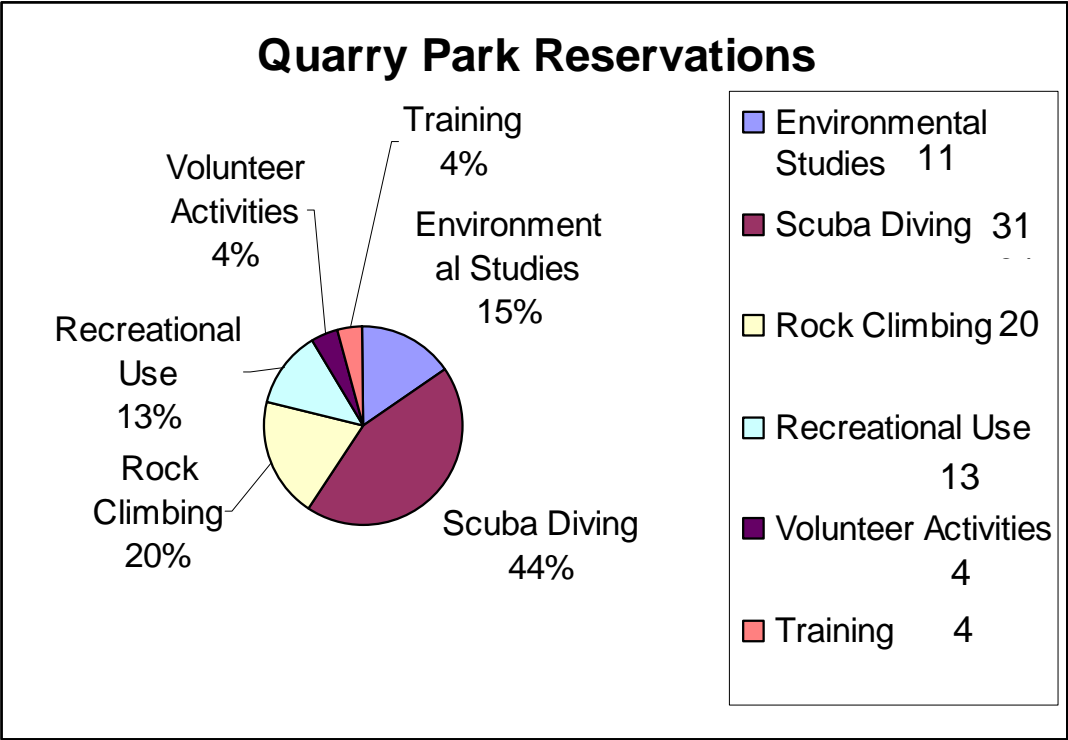


Figure 4

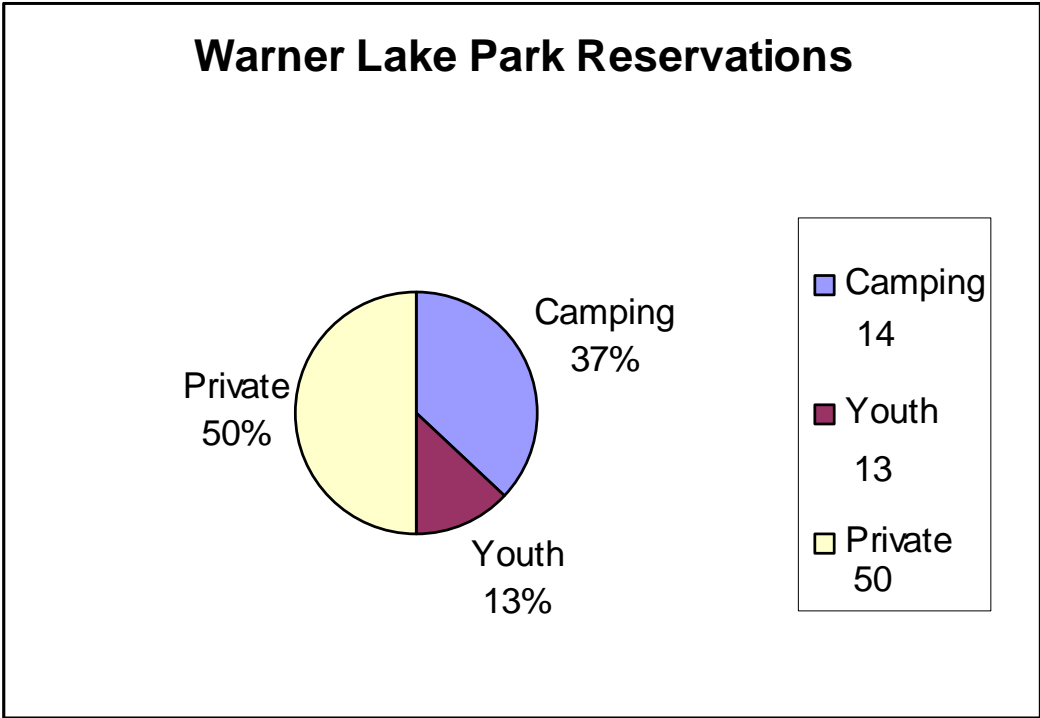


Figure 5

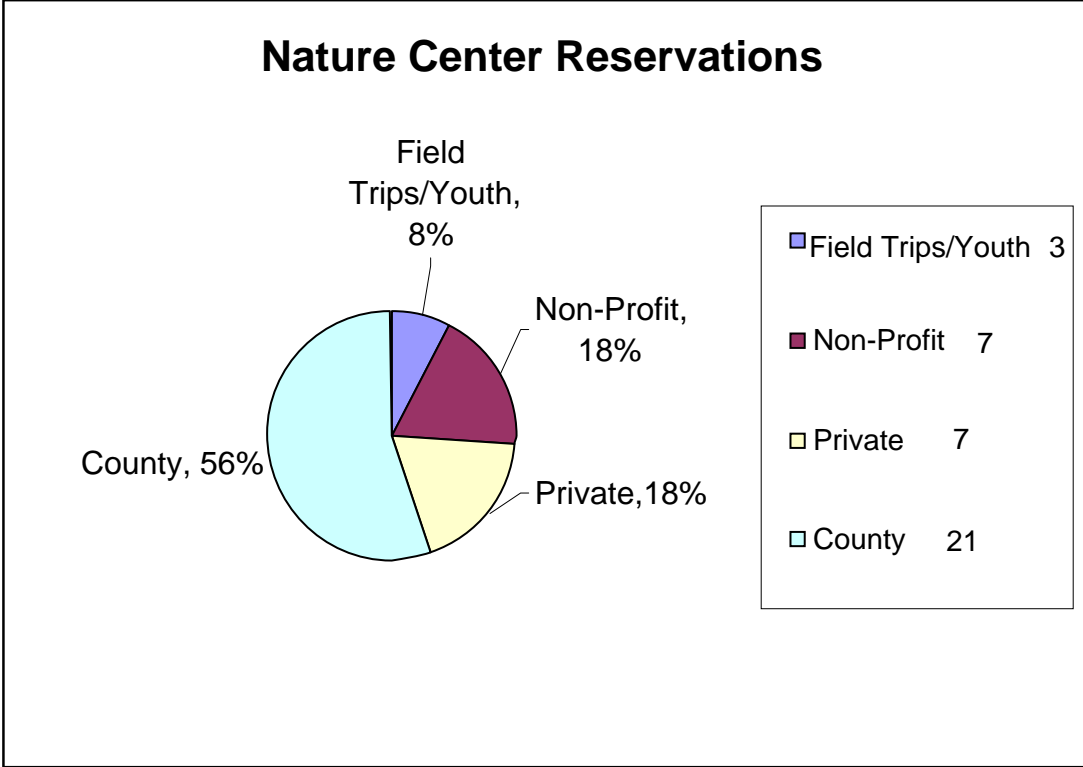


Figure 6

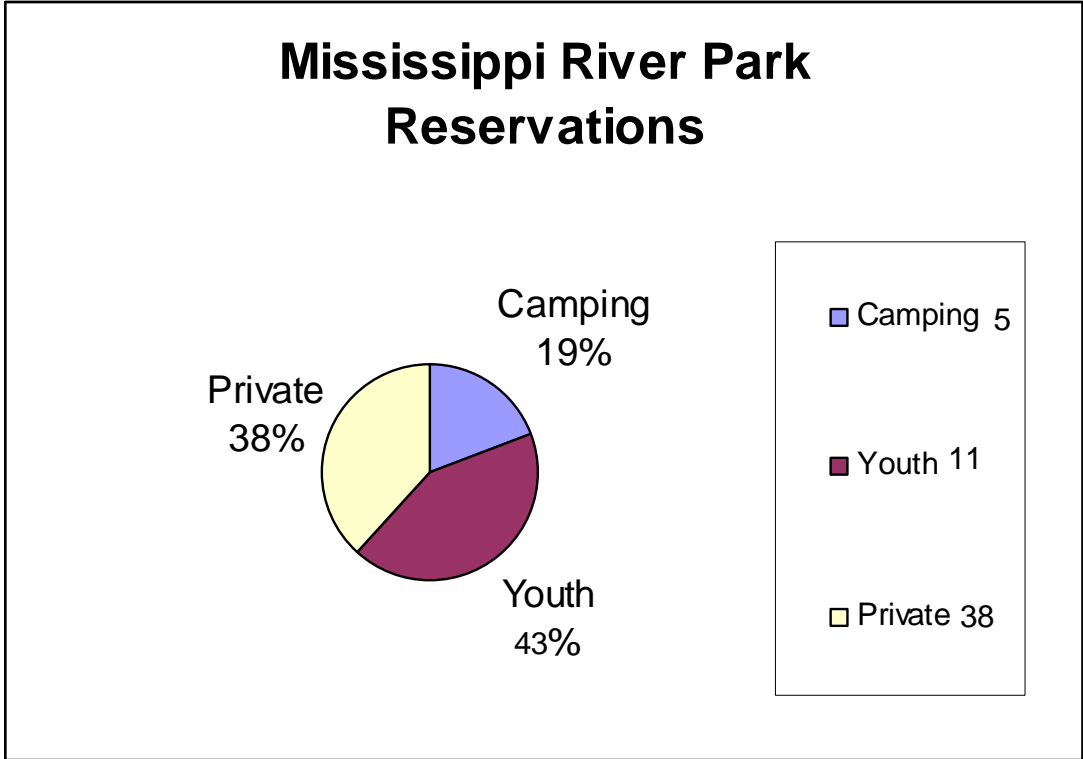


Figure 7

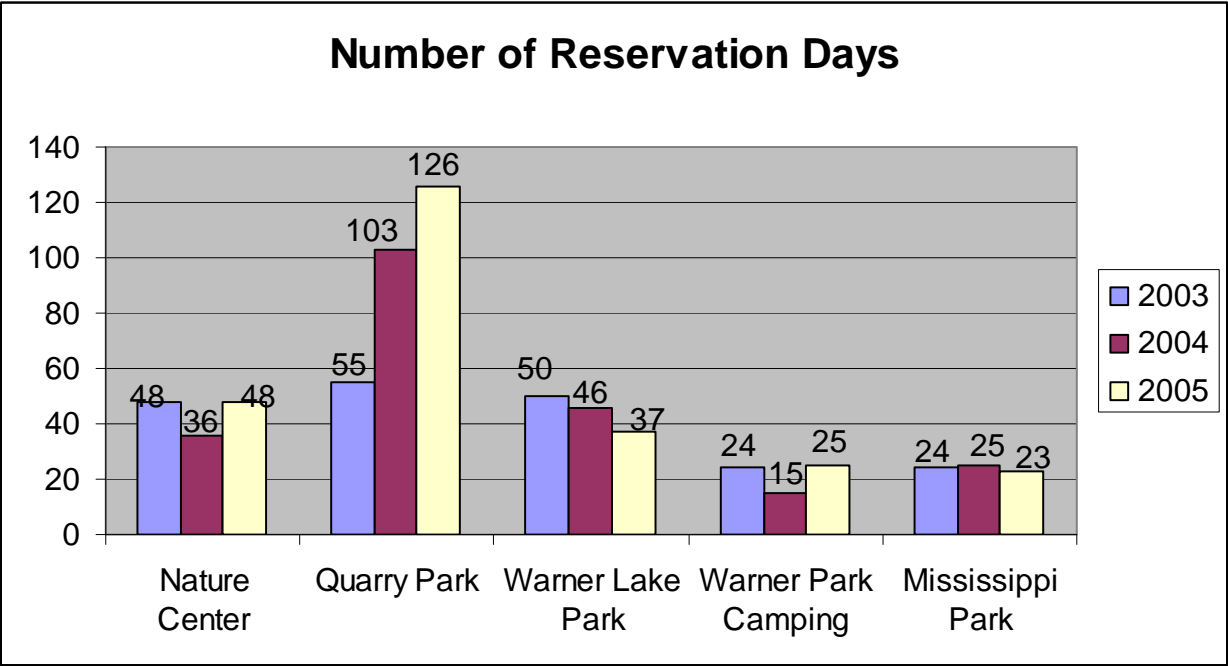


Figure 8

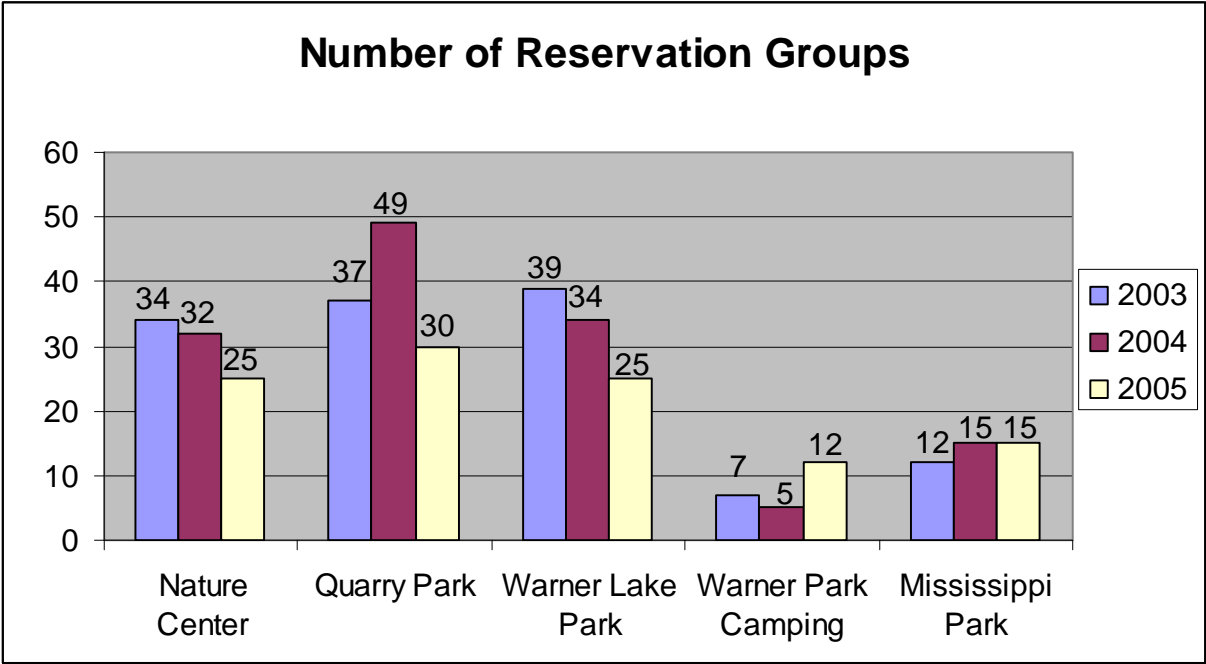


Figure 9