

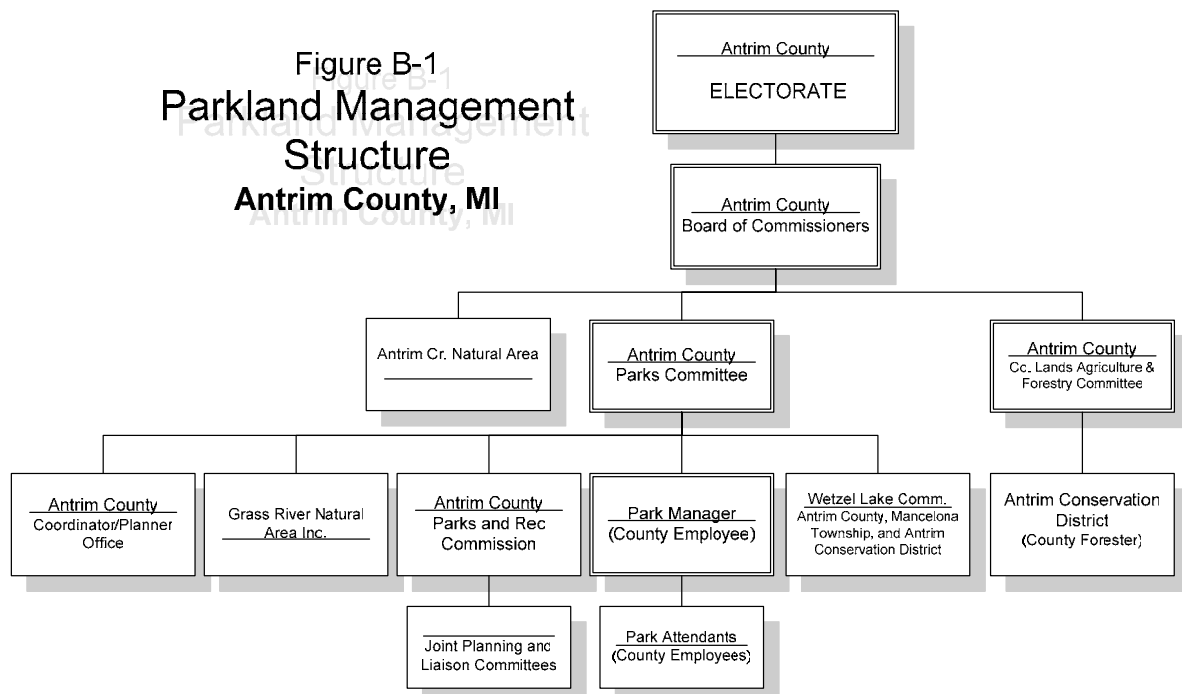
B. Administrative Structure

1. Antrim County Parks Management Structure

1.1 Directly Managed Facilities

Antrim County does not have a Parks Department, nor does it have a Parks Director. The County manages its recreational facilities by a mixture of direct management using a combination of County staff and by contracted management of specific facilities. Figure B-1 shows the management system for the park system in Antrim County.

Antrim County Parks Committee: In January of 2001 the Antrim County Board of Commissioners created the Parks Committee, a committee which advises the Board of Commissioners on issues relating to Parks and Recreation in Antrim County. The Parks Committee is comprised of three county commissioners whose purpose is to oversee the development and management of physical parks within Antrim County as well as increase recreational opportunities for the residents and visitors of Antrim County. The committee meets monthly on the Thursday of the week preceding the week of the Board of Commissioners meeting. Their recommendations to the County Board of Commissioners are voted and acted upon at the monthly Board meetings.



Antrim County Parks and Recreation Commission: The Antrim County Parks and Recreation Commission serves as an advisory body to the Parks Committee. As an advisory body, the Parks and Recreation Commission works on planning and implementing capital improvement projects, and reports directly to the Parks Committee of any and all findings. This body is not a PA261 organization; it serves purely as an advisory body to the Parks Committee. The Commission is comprised of 9 members appointed by the Board of Commissioners, and meets on the fourth Thursday of every month.

Park Staff and Administrative Support Personnel: Antrim County employs one seasonal park manager and numerous seasonal attendants at the county owned campground, **Barnes Park**. It is the role of the park manager to oversee the day to day operation of Barnes Park, **Noteware's Landing**, and the **Elk Rapids Day Park** and report to the Parks Committee any item of concern that may develop regarding the parks. The Parks Manager and staff also perform occasional maintenance on Antrim Creek Natural Area and other county parks. The Parks Committee reserves the right to assign additional duties to the park manager and staff as they see fit.

The staff of the County Coordinator/Planner Office administers any and all programs associated with county parks and/or recreation opportunities, i.e. grant administration, park development, trail implementation, etc. The staff of the Coordinator/Planner Office is the official record taker of all Parks Committee, the Antrim Creek Natural Area, and the Parks and Recreation Commission minutes. The same office holds all documents associated with the Parks Committee, Antrim Creek or Parks and Recreation Commission in its files.

1.2 Contracted and Jointly Managed Facilities

The Antrim County Board of Commissioners contracts with **Grass River Natural Area, Inc.** (GRNA), a private non-profit organization, to oversee the day-to-day management and expansion of the county-owned Grass River Natural Area, a 1,100-acre preserve on Grass River connecting Lake Bellaire and Clam Lake. One County Commissioner is appointed as a voting member of the Grass River Board of Directors. This helps to ensure County input and information coordination into the operations of Grass River Natural Area, Inc. The Grass River Natural Area, Inc. Board of Directors directly hires the Grass River Natural Area Executive Director. Currently GRNA employs one full-time director, one full-time office manager, one part-time membership information coordinator, one part-time education coordinator, four seasonal naturalists, and one part-time maintenance staff at the Natural Area. Volunteer labor is also extensively used for maintenance at this facility. The GRNA Executive Director makes monthly reports to the County Parks Committee.

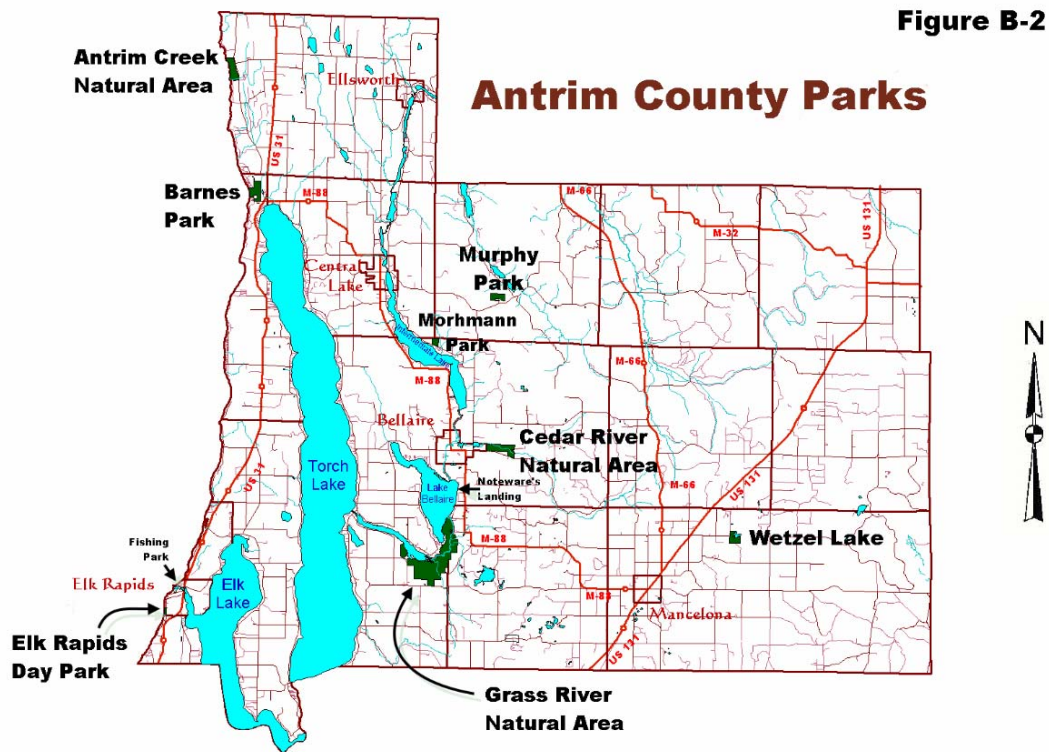
In cooperation with Banks Township and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the Antrim County Board of Commissioners has chosen to create a separate committee, known as the **Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission**, to oversee the development of 154 acres natural area, which includes nearly a mile of shoreline along Grand Traverse Bay into a natural area. The Board of Commissioners appoints all five members of the Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission. The Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission is a collaborative effort between the County of Antrim and Banks Township (the host community of the Natural Area). The County directly appoints three members of the Commission and the remaining two members are appointed by the County based upon the recommendations of the Banks Township Board.

In a partnership with **Mancelona Township** and the **Antrim Conservation District**, the Antrim County Parks Committee has established a day park at **Wetzel Lake**. Current plans include developing the park into a primitive campsite upon completion of a long-term lease agreement for the site between the County and the forestry management unit of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Antrim County contracts with the **Antrim Conservation District (ACD)** to manage its forest resources. As part of its contractual obligations, the ACD, through the County Forester, manages several parks and natural areas that lie entirely within the county forest lands under its jurisdiction. These include **Mohrman Park**, **Murphy Park**, and the new **Cedar River Natural Area**.

Finally, the **Elk Rapids Dam Fishing Park** at the tailrace area of the Elk Rapids Hydroelectric Dam and power plant is maintained by the Village of Elk Rapids through a lease agreement with the County for the land and the adjoining beach area.

Figure B-2 shows the locations of the County parks.



2. Antrim County Parks Operations

2.1 Standard Park Operational Procedures

All County park rules and regulations are established by resolution of the Antrim County Board of Commissioners. All rules and regulations are consistent with the operational state park rules and regulations, as established by the State of Michigan.

The County **Parks Committee** manages the county parks system. The Committee is comprised of three County Commissioners appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. The Committee meets monthly to discuss and make administrative and policy recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. It also makes management decisions on operational matters brought to its attention by the County Parks Manager. The Committee directs the County Parks and Recreation Commission in its planning activities for the County park system. The Parks Committee also oversees the Parks Manager in operating and budgeting for Barnes Park, Elk Rapids Day Park, and Noteware's Landing. The director of the Grass River Natural Area reports monthly to the Parks Committee at their scheduled meetings. They also exercise budgetary oversight over the activities of the Grass River Natural Area Commission. A member of the Committee serves as the chairman of the Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission.

The County **Parks & Recreation Commission**, as noted earlier, performs the research and planning functions on behalf of the Parks Committee. The Board of Commissioners appoints its nine members. It also includes the chairman of the County Road Commission, the Drain Commissioner, the County Forester, and the County Extension Service Director. Other members are selected from volunteers among County residents. The County Coordinator/Planner office serves the staff functions for this Commission. It coordinates activities and plans with counterpart parks and recreation commissions of local units of government and other organizations through the Parks & Recreation Forums and joint meetings with various groups. The Commission writes and updates the County Comprehensive Recreation Plan every five years. It commissions studies and special activities by consultants and contractors in the development of new recreational facilities. It reviews the parks plans of local units of government, and performs joint planning projects and studies with other governmental jurisdictions. It reports to, and receives instructions from, the County Parks Committee.

The **Antrim County Road Commission** is responsible for road maintenance and maintaining park access.

The Antrim County **Parks Manager** is responsible for the direct, day-to-day operations and management of all county park facilities except those with other managing bodies.

The **Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission** is responsible for the management and development of the Antrim Creek Natural Area (ACNA). The Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission is developing the facility under the guidance of the Antrim Creek Natural Area Master Plan.

The **County Forester** manages and maintains all county forestry properties. The County Forester maintains these properties in a manner consistent with good conservation and management principles. The park areas of Mohrmann Park, Murphy Park, and the Cedar River Natural Area are managed by the County Forester and his employer, the **Antrim Conservation District**. The Conservation District performs grant-writing services for many of the recreational grant applications by the County. District staff also assists the County in the maintenance and repair of some of the County park facilities, as requested and commissioned by the County Parks Committee. District staff representatives report monthly to the County Lands Agriculture and Forestry Committee.

The County of Antrim owns the Grass River Natural Area. By contract, management and maintenance of the facility is performed by the Grass River Natural Area, Inc.

2.2 Operational Budget

Appropriations for park operations and the operations of the County park system are made from the Antrim County General Fund on a yearly basis. The proposed 2005 budgets for both the County Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parks Department, as well as the various appropriations that comprise the County's contributions to the contracted entities, are summarized below.

Antrim County Park-related Operating Budget Items Proposed 2005 Funding Levels

Item	2005	Projected
Barnes Park Operation and Maintenance	\$171,436.00	\$150,000*
Elk Rapids Day Park Operation and Maintenance	\$8,952.00	\$10,000
Parks & Recreation Commission	\$7,250.00	\$25,000
County Appropriation: Grass River Natural Area	\$20,650.00	\$45,000
Antrim Creek Natural Area	\$5,880.00	\$10,000

NOTE: Funds for the maintenance of park facilities in forest lands are funded through the County's annual general appropriation for the Antrim Conservation District, which includes the cost of the District's management of the County Forest Lands. Projected decrease in Barnes Park O&M due to anticipated additional revenues from electrification of most campsites starting in 2005.

Annual operational expenditures for the Antrim Creek Natural Area are made from the Antrim County General Fund. An Endowment Fund has also been established for the preservation and maintenance of the Natural Area. This Endowment Fund is overseen by an Endowment Committee, chaired by the Antrim County Drain Commissioner, and managed on a day-to-day basis by a regional community foundation.

The County of Antrim provides an annual contribution of \$20,000 to \$30,000 to the Grass River Fund for operational expenses. Grass River Natural Area, Inc. provides nearly all of the rest of the appropriations for the management of the Grass River Natural Area. The majority of operational funds are generated through a variety of sources (membership fees, fund-raisers, program fees, etc.). The fulfillment of the Grass River master plan calls for

acquisition of additional wetland areas. This is typically accomplished through grants from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and from private funding sources.

The County Parks Committee, which has no standing budget, acts as a budgetary oversight committee over the county park system on behalf of the County Finance and Ways and Means Committee. By acting as a budgetary oversight committee the County Parks Committee can help ensure project priorities, reduce waste and inefficiency, and provide much closer budgetary review by "expert" individuals. The County Parks Committee oversees the budgetary processes for the Parks Department, the County Parks and Recreation Commission, and Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission, and the Grass River Natural Area. The County Forester's budgetary oversight committee is the County Lands, Agriculture, and Forestry Committee. They provide guidance to the Antrim Conservation District and the County Forester on the operation and development of recreational facilities on County forestlands.

Capital budgets for the various County-managed recreational entities are, whenever possible, provided by the County from its general fund. However, the recent financial crisis that many counties, including Antrim, face has forced an almost exclusive reliance on outside grant funding, both public and private, for capital improvements. Antrim County has recently applied, with varying degrees of success, for grants from the Rotary Charities, the Grand Traverse Band of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians, Coastal Zone Management, Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund, the Great Lakes Fisheries Trust, the Norcross Foundation, and various federal agencies. In these situations, the County will typically provide some percentage of the total project cost as a local cash match.

In the future, should funding through grants and the general fund alone be drastically insufficient to meet the needs of the parks and recreation system in Antrim County, other types of funding could be pursued by the County. A general countywide millage is one possibility. Another possibility would be purchase of stickers required to enter and use County recreation facilities. Special assessment districts may, in some case, be possible and appropriate. Such steps can only be taken after a thorough consensus develops in the County over the direction and long-term objectives that are articulated in the Comprehensive Recreation Plan.

2.3 Inter-Agency Relations

Coordination between the **County Parks Committee** and the various reporting entities is handled in a number of ways.

- 1) One County Commissioner on the Parks Committee also serves as a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission. This helps ensure information coordination and exchange between both bodies, consultation on maintenance and infrastructure improvement projects, and helps to further facilitate recommendations to the County Board of Commissioners. Furthermore, the chairman of the Parks & Recreation Commission or his/her designee also delivers an update on Parks & Rec activities at the monthly Parks Committee meetings.
- 2) The same County Commissioner also serves as a voting member of the Board of Trustees of Grass River Natural Area, Inc. This helps to ensure county input and

oversight into the operations of Grass River Natural Area, Inc. and the management of the Grass River Natural Area.

- 3) The County Parks Manager, the Director of the Grass River Natural Area, and the County Forester (or other staff of the Conservation District) regularly report at the meetings of both the County Parks Committee and the Parks & Recreation Commission. This ensures communication and coordination between staff and administrative body on various projects and in areas of overlapping administrative authority.
- 4) The staff of the County Office of the Coordinator/Planner serves as administrative staff to both bodies. This helps to ensure a proper flow of information and coordination of projects of mutual jurisdiction and interest.
- 5) The chairman of the Antrim Creek Natural Area Commission is a County Commissioner who is also a member of the County Parks Committee. Thus the Parks Committee is always briefed of relevant developments in the Antrim Creek Natural Area by this member.
- 6) At every meeting of the joint Wetzel Lake Committee, there is a representative of the Parks Committee, the Parks & Rec Commission, Mancelona Township, and the Antrim Conservation District. The Conservation District representative is the District Director, who also serves as the chair of the joint committee. The Director typically reports on Wetzel Lake activities to the Parks Committee and the Parks & Rec Commission.

Similarly, the **Parks & Recreation Commission** coordinates with various park-related entities around the County through regular meetings of joint planning committees and liaison meetings with civic groups interested in furthering recreational facilities in Antrim County. These include:

- 1) Liaison and coordination meetings with members of the Parks & Recreation Commissions of local units of government with which joint projects are being planned;
- 2) Information and coordination meetings with members of civic groups such as local Rotary Clubs that have an interest in facilities such as non-motorized trails through Antrim County that join the existing trails of neighboring counties;
- 3) Planning and convening the semi-annual County Parks & Recreation Forum, which gather local officials, civic groups, and interested county residents and provide a common forum to exchange information and develop useful contacts for future joint planning;

On-going multi-jurisdiction projects include the Wetzel Lake Park project, the Elk Rapids Day Park project, and, as funding allows, the Elk Rapids Fishing Park project. Future projects will most certain involve numerous townships and the County in the establishment of the Antrim County leg of the regional non-motorized trail (between Mackinac and Frankfort), as well as the establishment of new parks in the eastern half of Antrim County.

Furthermore, the chairman of the Antrim County Road Commission serves as a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission, facilitating communication between the two Commissions. Another stakeholder, the County Drain Commissioner, also serves on the Parks & Recreation Commission.

While management oversight of the County Forest Lands (and associated recreational facilities and natural areas) falls to the **County Lands Agriculture and Forest Committee**, one of the three County Commissioners on this Committee also serves as a member of the County Parks Committee. This interlocking membership of the two committees reinforces the information exchange process between the two committees, which is already being formally performed by the staff of the Antrim Conservation District, which regularly attends meetings of both committees.

2.4 Rules and Regulations Governing the Use of County Parkland

Rules governing the use of the various County-owned parks and natural areas in Antrim County are established and amended by a vote of the Board of Commissioners, upon recommendation of the County Parks Committee. Rules thus passed are typically posted at the parks and, in the case of Barnes Park, printed on the registration form/ticket for the campsites.

In special cases, where inter-jurisdictional agreements are involved, an ordinance for the establishment of the park or natural area may be enacted, with specific rules of use being part of such an ordinance. The Antrim Creek Natural Area Ordinance is such an ordinance.

The County ordinances governing forestlands serve as an umbrella for the management by the Antrim Conservation District of the parks and natural areas located in County forestlands. The specific rules and regulations governing each such parcel in the forestlands are laid out in the county forest management plan written by the County Forester and approved by the County Board of Commissioners.