



April 27, 2008
Revised May 15, 2008
Draft

Friends of Birds Hill Park Strategic Plan 2008-2012



Board of Directors, April, 2008

Myra Cross

Brent DePape

Lesley Anne Fuga

Maura Leahy

Doris McCormick

Shelley Morris

Len Spearman

Dave Woodcock

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1. Process

A combination of preparatory work, an all day workshop, discussion with the Park and a survey of the membership has been used in preparing this strategic plan. Also, significant information has been gathered over the years and this information was referred to through out the workshop and the writing of the Strategic Plan. This document outlines the process, information gathered and the conclusions developed through this process.

The agenda from the workshop can be found in Appendix A.

2. Review of Operating Agreement

A review of the Operating Agreement that the Friends of Birds Hill Park has with the Manitoba government (Minister of Conservation) identified the following areas of guidance and restrictions:

Guidance	Restrictions
Promote - protection, - enjoyment, - heritage	Prohibited from lobbying government
Enhance goals of Manitoba Conservation	All activities must be vetted and approved by park
Outdoor activity & tourism	Need to submit activity plan April 1
Complement program objectives of the Department	Must use approved logo and material
Facilitate projects among groups with common interest for Park	No personal, political or commercial agenda
Fundraise for Park	Activities and insurance
Bring resources to Park that they don't have	
Willingness to work together with the Department	
Pledge to work together toward common goals	

3. Park Plans & Priorities

We met with Park staff to determine what are its long and short term plans and how FoBHP could assist. We specifically sought priority areas for action.

Major activities within the Park are focused on improving environmental conditions and re-developing aging infrastructure. Many Park buildings are over 30 years old and road surfaces have only received spot maintenance since major improvements were completed for the 1997 Pan-Am Games. A new campground office building will be completed in early May. Landscaping around the office, including curbing, pavers and asphalt will hopefully be completed by early summer and a new shower building is in the planning stages. With respect to the roadway, major capital is required to avoid the use of seal coat, which ultimately disintegrates into a pebble-like material that is not suitable for walkers, cyclists, roller bladers and others. Funds have been requested for crack sealing this season.

The Park is seeking ways to lessen the potential for negative impacts on the environment, particularly the underlying aquifer. A recent research project on wells and water systems identified the need for greater levels of protection and the Park has begun capping old wells, drilling new wells, and implementing a major clean-up and manure management plan for the stable area. Construction of a new sewage lagoon was recently completed. A recycling initiative is underway which will likely result in 37 collection points in the park. As there is no market for glass, the plan is to exclude glass from the recycling initiative at this time. This will be re-evaluated in the future and will adjust the program accordingly.

The Park appreciates that the Friends provide for items and activities that might not otherwise be afforded due to lack of resources. Of note were the number of benches the Friends have purchased, the asphaltting of camp-sites for accessibility by people with disabilities, and the efforts of volunteers for the Annual Clean-up as well as many years of handling and sorting recyclables. The Park identified, but did not prioritize, a number of projects that it would support should the Friends decide to take them on:

- 3.1. Summer student – possible activities include cleaning the beach area, conducting public education
- 3.2. Sponsor recycling signage at the gates or possibly stickers on the bins, promote the recycling program
- 3.3. Adopt-a-trail
- 3.4. Trail markers
- 3.5. Playground equipment
- 3.6. Picnic shelters
- 3.7. Park clean-up
- 3.8. Activity Expo
- 3.9. Fostering linkages with the RM, local residents and park user groups
- 3.10. Bike racks

4. Environmental Scan

Within the Environmental Scan we took a look at what are other “Friends of Parks doing”, what do their Mission, Visions and Values look like. We also looked at the social, political, economic trends, geographical and demographic elements

Other Friends of Parks

Algonquin Park has over 3000 members
Spruce woods park very successful
Killarney has over 500 members

The Mission, Vision statements and Values are very similar to the Friends of Birds Hill Park. Many likely came into existence through the same process and framework. A sample of the information available from the Web pages is in Appendix B

Some of the things that the other Parks have done

- Hosts in campground
- Give brochures
- Advertise website on cards
- Fundraising
- Support the activities of the Park
 - Capital
 - Operational (maps, guides, interpretive)
 - Miscellaneous
- Running activities within the Parks
 - Equestrian Campground
 - Barn
 - Amphitheater
- Supporting publications
- Capital Equipment purchases
- revise and printing maps, interpretive display on acid rain, quarterly newsletter
- Environmental youth corps – 3 narrows dam, native plant nursery
- Paddle safety – canoe guide
- Annual Photo contest – art show
- Friends Day (Activity Expo?)
- Interpretive / Educational activities
- Support third party activities such as research, conservation
- Activities in the Park – by the Park, by someone else
- Education Kits & products
- Special Projects
- Kiosk

Other general factors that might be relevant to FoBHP's strategic future direction

Economic trends

- Cost of fuel
- Possibility of public transit to the Park in the future
- Risk that there may be renewed interest to mine gravel from the Park
- Increase competition for \$'s, both donations and Grant

Competitive trends

- Sale of goods (souvenirs) by group who are fundraising,
- Hard to get volunteers when time is at a premium,
- There are trends in what govt. and corporate donors willing to fund

Political trends

- More pressure on Government to demonstrate value for dollars they are spending
- Government emphasis on accountability

Demographic trends

- Boomers retiring with skills they might bring to the table,
- The younger folks are more environmentally sensitized,
- Dollars are being freed to focus on environmental activities
- People with more time on their hands
- Increase in day time use of the Park during the weekdays
- People looking for things to do

Technological trends

- Use of the internet for communication

Social trends

- Volunteer time,
- Renewed interest in activity health and wellness, environmental politics

Geographic

- Wide variety of interest groups due to proximity of the city.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) Analysis

We conducted a review of the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located close to Winnipeg • Corporate structure in place • People are interested – Core Membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low member numbers • Low dollars in bank
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Charitable Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently limited capacity to take on projects due to size of group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion of Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited connection to community and Stakeholders at present • Currently represent limited value proposition/credibility with Park Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects undertaken in the past, shows good profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don’t see ourselves as the fundraising arm of the Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the members interests and targeting activities towards those interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High development around the Park provides good base for volunteers and users 	

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untapped potential for membership drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with defined user groups, rural municipalities and schools, to develop collaborative relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low dollars in bank
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with neighboring municipalities, schools to develop relationships with kids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking on too much, or too large of a project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop relationships with other user groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fail to provide value propositions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piggy back on successful events at the Ranch and Folk Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking on projects that don’t add value to the Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sponsorships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bike companies ○ Others corporate partners 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Expo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of functioning Web Site
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Big leader boards at the entrances ○ Park Radio station ○ FBHP referred to on publications (Web page, donations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking on too many things with too little resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small local papers always looking for copy – free advertising for us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not connecting with what is meaningful in peoples lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our small size, lots of opportunity to grow 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link from conservation to us print material 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web on Park information 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for volunteers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for experience 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Job Grants 	

5. Mission

**The Friends of Birds Hill Park is a non profit Association
Committed to the Conservation, Enhancement,
and Ecological Preservation of Birds Hill Park
to the benefit of the park and its users.**

A Mission should be short and address the following

- 1-2 Succinct Sentences
- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Who are our Stakeholders
- describes the business

We reviewed our Mission statements and initially concluded that “non-profit Association” should be removed, after further discussion it was concluded that “Registered Charity” should be added.

**The Friends of Birds Hill Park is a non-profit Registered Charity
Committed to the Conservation, Enhancement,
and Ecological Preservation of Birds Hill Park
to the benefit of the park and its users.**

6. Vision

A Vision should paint a picture of what an organization desires to look like, it should provide focus and direction, be motivational, be based on future desire, be evolving, it should describe what does the organization look like in 2-5 years, provide an ideal yet realistic endpoint towards which the organization will strive, and give a picture of the future from which priorities can be drawn.

What do we want to look like in 2-5 years

The following is the result of the brainstorming:

- Large membership base
- Thriving organization
- Significant contribution
- Working in partnership with Park management
- Positive impact – meaningful experience for membership, the Government Conservation, Park, members, park users - valuable contributions
- Functional Web site
- The organization has presence
- Consultative – participatory – democratic
- Fun raising, fund raising
- Communicating with the membership
- Inspiring visitors and residents to assume personal responsibility for the preservation of the park's natural and cultural environment
- Enhancing user experience, stewardship/cooperative,
- Promoting diverse use of the park
- Tapping into fundraising opportunities
- One stop shop for information about the park - calendar
- Coordinating / facilitating / bringing user groups together
- A thriving democratic organization that promotes the sustainable use of the park through activities and initiatives to engage park user groups and individuals in good park stewardship
- Facilitating research and conservation efforts
- Promoting capital physical infrastructure enhancements – universal accessibility
- Promoting activities and initiatives that encourage enjoyment of the park while balancing the conserving, enhancing and ecological preservation of the Park
- We have
 - \$\$\$\$ in the bank
 - Volunteers
 - Strategic Focus
 - Members
- We are seen as the resource for coordinating groups of the Park
- We facilitate conservation projects at the park
- Have built up internal capacity to be able to take on more and larger projects

~ Fun Raising and Fund Raising at Birds Hill Park ~

Major Themes evolving

- **Building the Organization Infrastructure**
- **Enhancing Park Users' Experience**
- **Communication**
- **Conservation and Preservation of the Park**
- **Fundraising**

7. Values

The values of the organization are the glue that holds things together. The values of the Friends of Birds Hill Park are:

Democratic
Inclusive
Environmentally Sustainable
Diversity
Cooperation
Openness
Transparency
Accountability
Fun
Meaningful
Preservation
Stewardship
Sustainability

8. Strategic Priorities for 2008 to 2012

Working with major themes that have developed we undertook a Brain Storming session under these headings:

Build organization and Infrastructure		Conservation & preservation of Park	
Membership drive	√√√√√	Research opportunities	√√
Corporate sponsorship		Recycling	√√√
Summer Student	√√√√√	Adopt-a-trail	√√
Park relationship	√	Supply dog poop bags	√
Partnerships		Park clean up	√√√
		Kotelwich homestead	
Fund Raising	√	Enhance User Experience	
Corporate sponsorship		Playground	√
Fundraising drive		Picnic shelter	√
Merchandise sales		Tennis Courts	
Coin boxes	√	Trail markers	√√
Co-op # promotion		Paint benches	√√
Donation program	√	Expo	√√√
Communication		New or enhanced interpretive center	
Web page	√√√√√	Equestrian campground	
Calendar/ One stop info	√√	Interpretive brochures:	
Newsletter		- 1 panel for FOBHP	
Communicate/liaise with campground hosts		Host Program on Ski Trail	
Publication/Business Card	√√√√	Bike Rack at Showers	√
		Interpretive supplies	√

9. Priorities

The work shop participants were given 5 dots and asked to vote on the items identified in the Strategic Priorities; those dots are represented by √ in the above table.

Board Members will be assigned to take the lead for each of the 5 major Priority Themes and for each of the Activities. These Activities will be further developed and will become the Operational Plan for 2008.

Some Activities will span beyond 2008 and may be multi year.

10. Strategic Planning Cycle

Every three years the Board plans to review and update the Strategic plan.

11. Annual Operating Plan for 2008

To be prepared after input from the membership and approval

**Friends of Birds Hill Park
Strategic Planning Process
2008 and beyond**

1. Workshop
 - a. Review of Operating Agreement
 - i. Identifying guidance & restrictions
 - b. Environmental Scan
 - i. What are other "Friends of Parks" doing?
 - c. Develop and/or reaffirm
 - i. Vision,
 - ii. Mission
 - iii. Values
 - d. Park Plans & Priorities
 - i. Short Term
 - ii. Long Term
 - e. Identify Strategic Priorities for 2008 to 2012
 - f. Identify Outcomes for each Priority
 - g. Prioritize Priorities
 - h. Determine Strategic Planning Cycle
 2. Write Strategic Plan
 3. Board Review & Approval of Strategic Plan
 4. Develop Annual Operating Plan for 2008
 5. Board Review & Approval of 2008 Operating Plan
-

Invitees to the Work Shop:

- Friends of Birds Hill Park Board of Directors
- Staff from the Birds Hill Park

Environmental Scan – Web Pages of Other Friends of Parks

This is a link to a discussion of mission & vision statements, followed below by some examples from similar organizations.

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_90.htm

Friends of Forest Park

The mission of Friends of Forest Park is to maintain, preserve, protect, and improve the City of Portland's Forest Park so as to enhance its value as an irreplaceable asset for wildlife habitat and for the use and enjoyment of the public.

The Friends of Awenda Park

Mission Statement:

The Friends of Awenda is a non-profit, charitable, volunteer organization working in cooperation with Ontario Parks. The Friends are dedicated to the preservation, understanding and interpretation of Awenda's biological, geological and cultural treasures.

Friends of Morningside Park

We are a volunteer community-based coalition of residents and institutions dedicated to preserving and improving, our important historic park.

Our Mission and Purpose

- To rehabilitate Morningside Park in the City of New York in accordance with the ideals of the park's designer, Frederick Law Olmsted, and to organize, propose, and oversee rehabilitative projects that will preserve the Olmstedian landscape and/or maintain facilities within Morningside Park.
 - To promote and perpetuate the sociological and philosophical intentions of the renowned landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, through, but not exclusively through, clause 1 above.
 - To work closely with the Morningside Park community to establish and promote various facilities and functions within Morningside Park.
-

Friends of Latham Park Association

Mission Statement:

Preserve, protect and promote the legacy and vision of Clara Latham for this park, and strive to carry on her dedication to the community

Friends of Birds Hill Park – Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012

Woodstock Equestrian Park Foundation (formerly Friends of Woodstock Equestrian Park)

Vision Statement

I envision the Park as a premier equestrian destination that includes trails, courses, rings and indoor facilities to be used by equestrians of all disciplines.

Competitions will be held at the Park and the casual trail rider will be accommodated too. The Park will contribute to the economy of the surrounding community and preserve the rural nature of its 800 acres of land, much of which is still being farmed today.

Woodstock will therefore honour the area's rural tradition and history and remain true to the rural character of Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve, the 91,000 acre crescent of land in which it resides.

Lydia McClain, President

Woodstock Equestrian Park Foundation

Mission

Our mission is to preserve and promote the equestrian tradition through the careful planning and responsible stewardship of Woodstock Equestrian Park.

Woodstock Equestrian Park Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization. All contributions are tax deductible as donations to a 501(c)3 organization in accordance with IRS regulations.

Great Park Conservancy

Vision Statement

The Conservancy envisions one of the world's great metropolitan parks.

Mission Statement

The role of the Great Park Conservancy is to generate and maintain public and private support throughout Orange County and beyond for the development and operation of the Orange County Great Park.

Illinois Association of Park Districts Mission Statement

The IAPD is a non-profit service, research and education organization that serves park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies. The association advances these agencies, their citizen board members and professional staff in their ability to provide outstanding park and recreation opportunities, preserve natural resources and improve the quality of life for all people in Illinois.

Vision Statement

As a national leader, IAPD will provide superb association services to its members.

IAPD will achieve our vision by:

- Strengthening our alliances with environmental, economic and human service agencies throughout Illinois and the nation.
- Maintaining a strong relationship with state and national governmental leaders.
- Establishing grants and other new revenue streams for our members.
- Addressing the problem of decreasing open spaces and natural areas in Illinois.
- Assisting our members in the promotion of healthy lifestyles for all ages and abilities.
- Assisting our members in their ability to meet community challenges, such as youth-at-risk, obesity and the demands of increasingly senior and diverse populations.
- Helping our member agencies thrive in spite of limited tax-based revenues.
- Educating elected and appointed officials to work in cooperation with fellow board members to promote a stronger community through public parks, recreation and conservation.

Friends of Birds Hill Park - Strategic Plan 2008 - 2012

IAPD's organizational strengths will include the creation and delivery of:

- Orientation and training programs for citizen board members;
- Citizen advocacy initiatives that direct and draw on the power of our individual members to educate policymakers on issues of vital importance to the mission of park, recreation and conservation agencies;
- Educational materials such as the Illinois Parks and Recreation magazine, books and newsletters, a dynamic association web site, in-depth and challenging educational seminars, and an annual conference;
- Technical assistance that helps member agencies increase their efficiency, meet their goals or acquire more funding;
- More opportunities for member agencies to save costs on such budget items as utilities, insurance and other operational expenses.

The IAPD will continue to achieve these results in a fiscally responsible manner that assures the association's viability and makes membership a cost-effective necessity for all members.

Dicken Woods Nature Area Vision Statement

Through mutual collaboration between the Friends of Dicken Woods, the City of Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation Department, Dicken Elementary School, and other stakeholders, Dicken Woods Nature Area will be maintained and improved as an ecological, educational, and recreational community asset.

Friends of McGuire Lake Mission Statement

Friends of McGuire Lake is a **not for profit volunteer organization** dedicated to protecting and preserving the existing natural environment of McGuire Lake Park so that it may be understood, respected and enjoyed by all residents of Salmon Arm.

Our Mission is to undertake the responsibility to create and maintain a management plan for McGuire Lake and surrounding park in partnership with the City of Salmon Arm, corporate and individual subscribers. The plan area is inclusive of all lands and waters bounded by the Trans-Canada Highway on the south, 7th St. NE on the west and 8 Ave. NE on the north and the hospital lands to the east.

Friends of McGuire Lake Vision Statement

McGuire Lake Park will continue to be a significant and welcoming, natural asset to Salmon Arm's lifestyle. Visitors and residents alike recognize this natural sanctuary as a permanent - if not the pre-eminent - feature of our City's landscape.

McGuire Lake Park, as a valued and protected community resource, will require minimal human interference and intrusion, and limited development of artefacts. The park and lake must be carefully maintained. Judicious enhancements of existing vegetation and wildlife habitat may be permitted. Environmental alteration in McGuire Lake Park's natural ecosystems will be minimal to continue to provide for its appreciation by the public

BON ECHO PARK

Our Values

The Friends of Bon Echo Park is an association of volunteers. We value the significance of teamwork and initiative in effecting change. We are empowered to serve this active provincial park by our commitment to our natural and cultural heritage. We strive to act in a manner that is environmentally conscientious.

Our Vision

Our Vision is to provide and assist activities that encourage recognition of the inherent beauty of the environment as well as the dedicated balance in the natural habitat. Creative expression and its appreciation are supported. Understanding of our cultural heritage is fostered through our publications, projects, and presentations. Our educational programs and activities reflect our values and vision. Projects in which we engage endeavour to generate a positive climate within the Park.

Our Mission

Our Values and Vision are reflected in our Mission Statement.

The Friends of Bon Echo Park is a non profit organization dedicated to preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Bon Echo Provincial Park.