

Parks and Recreation

Mission

To manage and interpret Indiana's unique natural, wildlife, and cultural resources, provide for compatible recreational opportunities, and sustain the integrity of these resources for future generations.

Summary of Activities

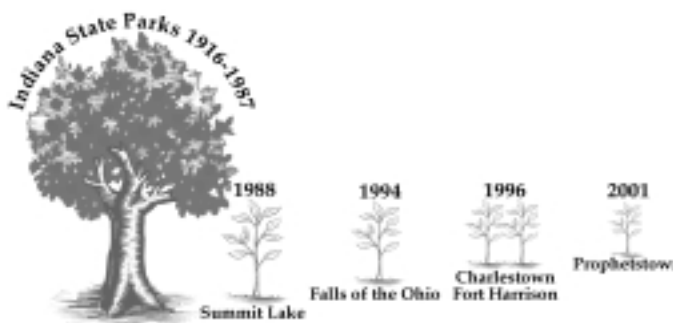
The **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** manages Indiana's system of 32 state parks and reservoirs. The 23 state parks comprise 62,322 acres across Indiana. The nine reservoirs include eight properties built by the Army Corp of Engineers for flood control, covering 114,7213 acres. The DNR is responsible for protecting Indiana's natural resources, providing recreational opportunities, maintaining the state's natural capital assets and infrastructure, and educating visitors and the general public about the environment and the importance of environmental protection. The experiences offered at Indiana state parks and reservoirs are diverse. Seven parks have inns where visitors can stay in indoor accommodations, while others offer camping, fishing, hiking, boating, and access to a variety of natural environments.

In promoting outdoor recreation, the DNR manages a Statewide Trails program and a Natural and Scenic Rivers program. Two hundred eleven miles of snowmobile trails are maintained via cooperative agreements with five local snowmobile clubs. Indiana's longest hiking trail, the Knobstone Trail, is 58 miles long. Indiana has 3 designated scenic streams that protect nearly 108 miles of river corridor: Wildcat Creek, the Blue River and Cedar Creek. DNR matching grant programs currently fund 53 local recreation development and acquisition projects, allowing local governmental agencies to acquire and develop recreational facilities.

External Factors

Indiana's success in providing high-quality state parks and recreational opportunities has increased the demand for these services. Public demand for more comfortable and modern recreational services (full hookup camp sites, cable television in DNR inns, etc.) continues to increase. Providing and maintaining these increased service levels is a challenge. The DNR is also operating under increased requirements for sewage testing, treatment and disposal, trash removal and disposal, and employee testing. Indiana's low unemployment rate impacts employee recruitment, particularly in the summer months. As more private land is restricted from use by hunters, public lands come under increasing pressure to provide places for hunters to recreate.

Evaluation and Accomplishments



complete boundaries and improve management. Since 1988, acreage managed as state parks has increased by roughly 10%. Park visitations at pre-1988 parks have increased by 7.6% over that time. From an annual visitation of 33,600 in 1919, Indiana's state parks now have nearly 20 million visitor days per year.



Visitation at reservoir properties has increased by approximately 33% since 1980, with more than 60,000 hunting opportunities taking place each year. Approximately 200,000 walleye fry are stocked annually, while wild turkeys have been successfully reintroduced in Salamonie, Mississinewa, and Huntington.



The DNR has improved services to customers by upgrading campgrounds, comfort stations, nature centers, and inns. Water and wastewater operations have been improved, while energy use audits were performed to reduce energy consumption. The state's commitment to its cultural heritage has been strengthened by engaging in a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, and training staff in historic preservation maintenance techniques. DNR natural resource stewardship activities have been enhanced by aggressively seeking out and controlling invasive exotic species expanding on state properties.

“...we have set aside forever a part of the original domain. That by leaving it in its natural condition we have made the past intelligible to our and to coming generations.”

– Richard Lieber

Two new nature centers are currently being designed for Mounds State Park and Salamonie Reservoir. A new nature center was opened at Ft. Harrison State Park, and exhibits at many current state properties are being updated. In addition, the DNR continues to offer increased opportunities for children and visitors to participate in interactive programs on state properties which teach environmental ethics while providing entertainment and fun.

Plans for the Biennium

At Prophetstown State Park, the DNR will continue to acquire new land for park completion, finish basic infrastructure design and construction, build basic public use facilities such as picnic areas, and begin general operations. The DNR also expects to acquire additional land at Charlestown State Park. Efforts will continue to build and reclaim wetland areas. The DNR will improve customer service at state park inns, campgrounds, and other facilities through repaired and reconstructed facilities. The Outdoor Recreation division will respond to the increased demand for services, especially through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program, greenway initiatives, and expansion of both on-road and off-road bicycling opportunities.

