

CONSERVATION, PARKS AND RECREATION

Key Issues in Conservation, Parks and Recreation

- Water Quality (pages 4 – 8)
- Park and Park Access (page 9)
- Trail Development (pages 10 – 11)

Countywide Goals

- Provide an awareness of the importance of drinking water protection to the general health and well being of the County's residents.
- Promote public health, economic development and community infrastructure by insuring a high quality drinking water supply for all residents of the community.
- Protect and improve all ground and surface waters
- Maintain and upgrade existing park and recreational facilities.
- Further the development of the recreational trail system throughout Nobles County.

Introduction

During the period of initial settlement by Euro-American civilization, Nobles County was primarily covered by tallgrass prairie. The prairie land was originally diverse and full of lush plant growth that enabled it to support many different types of animals. Although 90% of the Nobles County prairie has been plowed, the County has retained some of this grassland along railroad rights-of-way and along riparian corridors. Riparian corridors, located along Kanaranzi Creek, Champepadan Creek, and Little Rock River, are some of the most notable tracts of grassland. The railroad rights-of-way are home to some of the last known true prairie in the County. Within these rights-of-way are assortments of rare plant communities that are not only native to the County, but that have been home to various forms of wildlife for many years. Sunrise County Park and Compass Prairie Scientific and Natural Area, each contain small natural prairie remnants.

The Buffalo Ridge marks the last major advance of glaciers in southern Minnesota. This feature also represents a natural divide in Nobles County. To the east, the landscape contains more lakes and wetlands. To the west, the landscape is more characterized by deeper and more extensive streams and rivers. These differences continue to define natural resource patterns on the land. In the west, steeper and deeper channels and valleys are inherently difficult to farm, and in many places were never likely plowed. Relatively large tracts of grassland tend to follow linear riparian corridors. However, these areas have historically been used for intensive pasturing of cattle and few people know about the native plant communities existing in these areas. To the east, wetlands and shallow lakes were the principal obstacle to crop production.

Like all resources, conservation areas and parks must be managed as sustainable resources. An inadequately maintained or neglected facility results in a run down and polluted area. The problem of overcrowding, if let go without appropriate action, can overload the resource in a short time. These problems can cause what were once attractive recreational areas, to become dilapidated and unattractive. The County should continue to address the challenge of maintaining conservation resources by keeping them free of litter and ensuring that their amenities remain in good repair.

Issues Summary

A topic that was discussed often in regards to parks and recreation was the development of recreational trails throughout Nobles County. Some felt that more money should be used for roads instead of trails, as some of the current trails planning seem extravagant. However, many residents feel that these trails would be an excellent way to make connections between urban, rural, and recreational areas as long as dead ends were either limited or completely eliminated. Some of these rural to urban connection ideas consisted of using trails to connect Worthington to Lake Bella or Worthington to Lake Ocheda.

Parks were identified as an important issue at community meetings. Residents expressed concern as to overall park accessibility throughout the County and noted that they would like to see paved roads entering appropriate parks. They felt this could be one way to generate more park usage but many already felt that their communities' parks were presently being managed properly.

There was a noted fear in seeing the amount of camping developments on County parks increase. It was believed that this would lead to park degradation. It was thought that an increased camping presence and overall increased park usage would increase the amount of trash and litter generated. This led to a fear that extra precautions to address this effect would need to be implemented. However, as this is a basic component of park management, this should not be a major issue.

Water conservation issues were also discussed frequently at the community meetings. Residents said that they feared there is a large amount of pollution going into the watersheds and they blamed industry and the larger cities in the county for this problem. However, agricultural run off is a major contributor to this problem. Practices that include fall application of nitrogen and applying more units than is necessary, greatly contribute to water pollution. Residents wanted to see increased efforts for improving water quality and protecting all of the County's water sources. The presence of phosphates in the water is often the result of improper watershed management practices, agricultural practices, and urban storm water. Increased phosphates were a concern because a phosphate increase can cause increased algae blooms in lakes and rivers posing a negative affect on aquatic life.

Conservation, Park and Recreation Strengths

Many felt that the development of the recreational trail system within the County will provide excellent opportunities for bikers and runners as well as increased recreational opportunities for older children. It is hoped that recreational trails will help both the young and old to connect

with the area. A trail system could be used to connect facilities such as Veteran's Memorial, located in Summit Lake Township, to Prairie Expo, which is located in Worthington. A trail system that is connected not only to itself, but also with attractive amenities such as the two listed above, would bring further utilization to all three projects.

Rural residents felt that the rural water supplies, which include Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water and the natural ground water system, constitute one of their most special natural resources. These resources should be protected. Nobles County will have a consistent, continuous supply of water, if it properly manages these resources.

Overall, residents felt they should build on the attractive amenities that they already possess, such as lake areas and park systems. Development of these amenities should be regulated to impose the least impact to natural wildlife and water quality.

Conservation, Park and Recreation Weaknesses

Weaknesses were identified as: lacking in overall recreation areas, a decline in the amount of park usage within the County, park fees and limited camping facilities.

The Future of Conservation, Park and Recreation Areas

Ideas to address the weaknesses include: increasing the amount of recreation areas within the County, increase in the amount of available campsites, and further the development of the trails system. Further development of this system will be realized by linking trails to each other and to other types of special places. The special places include campsites, parks, and major features such as Prairie Expo.

Future planning in this area should continue to consist of preserving existing facilities to prevent deterioration. The County could take substandard recreational areas and change their uses by using funding from the DNR to provide new uses such as ATV parks or snowmobile trails. Surface water issues should continue to be a large part of this issue. All water and watersheds should continue to remain protected and preserved.

Environmental Analysis

Nobles County is benefited by its inventory of well-kept natural resources, which include its parks, open spaces, wildlife, and different bodies of water. As mentioned earlier in the Land Use Section, Nobles County has:

- 32 Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) totaling 3,700 acres,
- 4 Federal Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA's) totaling 500 acres,
- 2 wetland restoration easements,
- 1 State Scientific and Natural Area, Compass Prairie.

Except for wetland easements, all of the afore mentioned amenities are open for public use. Other open spaces include Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) land that takes marginal agricultural

land out of production and converts it into uses such as wildlife habitats, erosion controls, flood controls, and groundwater recharge areas.

Water Resources

There are approximately 5,000 acres of open water in Nobles County. This open water is characterized in three categories: lakes, marshes, rivers and streams. Of the 29 wetlands, gravel pits, lakes and marshes covered by County or City shoreland ordinances, all are suitable for recreational, wildlife, and scenic purposes, but thirteen have been found to be potentially attractive for recreational or general development. A Nobles County water features map is located in the Map Section, Map #21.

In Nobles County, three main watersheds drain water within the County and each include a watershed district, they are the:

- Rock River Watershed (Missouri River Watershed)
 - Kanaranzi – Little Rock Watershed District
- West Fork of the Des Moines River (Headwaters) Watershed (Mississippi River Watershed)
 - Heron Lake Watershed District
- Little Sioux River Watershed (Missouri River Watershed)
 - Okabena Ocheda Watershed District

Water Supply

Nobles County has a limited ground water supply. Residential, agricultural, and industrial demand placed on the water supply is great, relative to capacity of available aquifers. These shallow aquifers that provide the greatest amount of water to Nobles County are also the most vulnerable to pollution. Steps implementing wellhead protection should continue to restrict polluting land uses adjacent to these aquifers.

The Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water System currently provides water to the western half of Nobles County and Red Rock Rural Water covers a northeast portion of the County. This leaves a large void within the County that is not serviced by rural water. Due to high demand and existing water shortages during times of extended drought, the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System has been identified as a means to provide a supplemental water supply. Water from the Missouri River will be diverted, treated, and piped to Iowa, South Dakota and southwest Minnesota. This system will provide potable water to Nobles County but it should be viewed as a supplemental water supply and not an answer to water shortage problems. The entire system will need approximately 10-12 years of further development and construction and a large amount of funding derived from federal sources before it even comes online.

In addition to Lewis and Clark, a Water Exploration Task Force is currently searching for new water supplies within southwest Minnesota. Representatives from rural water services within

southwest Minnesota and northwest Iowa have said they would like to extend their service to areas not presently being served by a rural water system. Before they can do this, a water source must be found. Through an integrated regional water supply system, problem water supply shortages can be solved. Nobles County must continue to support the Task Force and its efforts. This will aid those areas not currently being serviced and also strengthen Worthington's reserves for industrial purposes.

Policies and strategies regarding economic development, with respect to water intensive industry, will have to be considered with the limited available water resources. In cases of severe drought, the Water Appropriations Law says that agricultural processing industries take priority over non-agricultural industries when those industries use over 10,000 gallons of water per day. This means local officials will need to take into account the needs of all existing industries and the ability of the current water reserves to support them before encouraging the development of more water intensive industries.

Wellhead Protection Plan

The City of Worthington will soon be developing a source water protection plan. This plan will address land uses and land management practices around the City's wellhead. Since the Bella Well Field supplying water to the City is outside of Worthington's corporate limits, the City of Worthington will have little legal authority to implement the proper land use controls within the vicinity of the wellhead. The City of Worthington, and all communities in similar situations, should work with the County to aid in the process of implementing adequate protection of all wellhead areas.

Past land and water conservation efforts in Nobles County should be continued, and, where appropriate, the development of recreational facilities in conjunction with conservation projects should be encouraged. Practices include wetland restorations, installing riparian buffers, re-establishing legally required buffer strips on public drainage systems, and temporary or permanent retirement of marginal and erodible croplands through programs such as CRP or the previously mentioned RIM. In addition, cities need help in protecting their water supplies. Unlike rural residents that may be hooked up to a rural water system, a city's water is local and therefore needs protection from all sources of pollution. A map showing Nobles County groundwater sensitivity is found in the Map Section, Map #22.

The Heron Lake Watershed District, which has recently been awarded a Conservation Partners Grant, provides an example of the types of activities that should be pursued within Nobles County. The grant came from the Department of Natural Resources to enable the District to continue watershed monitoring, promote wildlife enhancement projects near Heron Lake, and provide support for graduate-level research designed to identify factors limiting the growth of sago pondweed in Heron Lake. Through this program, water quality will be monitored throughout the watershed, aquatic vegetation surveys will be completed, watershed maps and databases will be updated, waterfowl nesting baskets will be monitored, and educational seminars will be organized and promoted.

Water Supply Management

Well depths throughout the County are becoming more and more of a concern for the County's residents. Several cities have wells that are located within areas of very high susceptibility to groundwater contamination. Contamination results from not only pollution, but natural causes as well. Some rural areas within the County contain large amounts of sulfates. These sulfates may pose problems not only for people drinking the water, but for farmers who have livestock drinking large amounts of the water as well.

Water recharge in these areas can occur in a matter of hours and is vulnerable to pollutants that result from inappropriate land uses. Since this is where the water supplies are, action should be taken not to restrict the development of these wells, but instead to aid in the protection of these wells from potential contamination. A Nobles County well index map is located in the Map Section, Map #23. Cities that have wells that are in areas of high concern are listed below.

City	Well Depths (In Feet)
Lismore	42, 23
Adrian	26, 42 (Two Additional Wells, Data Unavailable)
Ellsworth	20, 29
Worthington	Bella Well Field (64, 69, 75, 75, 80, 87, 102)

Source: DNR Division of Waters; "SWUD" Database

Floodplains

Nobles County has had few problems dealing with areas of dramatic flooding. Minimal flooding occurs throughout Nobles County, which has led to its designation as Zone C (areas of minimal flooding).

This is not to say that problem areas do not exist in Nobles County. Several areas of the County, such as the length of the Kanaranzi Creek south of Interstate Highway 90, is an area where the floodplain remains wide through the City of Adrian. The Nobles County Water Management Plan identifies the floodplains along Champepadan Creek in the Leota and Lismore Townships, and the Norwegian Creek in Grand Prairie Township, as problem areas in danger of frequent flooding. Development activity in these susceptible areas should be minimal so as to not be impacted by floodwaters. Through a set-aside program, high flood risk areas could receive a permanent vegetative cover in order to help alleviate problems caused by flooding.

Aquatic Life

Nobles County boasts several lakes that provide adequate fishing resources. Six Lakes: East and West Graham, Okabena, Ocheda, Bella and Indian Lake, all provide sufficient opportunities for catching game fish. These lakes are generally shallow. Okabena is considered the deepest as its maximum depth is 13.9 feet and its mean depth is 6.9 feet. Lake Ocheda is the shallowest with average depths at only five feet. By using such techniques as fish stocking, reclamation and

aeration systems (needed to reduce the occurrence of winter kill), sport fishing is available on local lakes.

Land use and management practices that have occurred throughout Nobles County have caused water quality degradation in all of the County's lakes. Due to the increase in nutrients in the water column, the County's lakes have seen an increase in algae blooms and other suspended sediments. With this decrease in water clarity, the sunlight is not able to reach all areas of the lake and this restricts many different kinds of plant growth. This not only eliminates a food supply for many game fishes, but it also favors the growth of less desirable species such as carp and black bullhead. These fish then cause greater destruction to the lake by uprooting other types of vegetation and sending more debris into the water column. All of the lakes within the jurisdiction of Nobles County are classified as Natural Environment, which means they have limited development potential. Guidelines for the development of Natural Environment Lakes were developed by the DNR and adopted by the County in its zoning code.

Biological Resource Management

Nobles County should continue to further the development of natural resource protection through various means. This way, recreational activities such as fishing, hunting and wildlife watching, can be assured for future generations. Since Nobles County is made up of prime agricultural land, and this land is unlikely to be used for conservation purposes, steps must be taken to preserve what the County already has set aside. The County is not limited in ways to approach this task and some are listed below.

Land Use Controls

By using conservation overlay districts, Nobles County can protect important wildlife areas that are threatened by development and other types of land use alteration. Areas for overlay districts include the previously mentioned riparian corridors, such as those found within close proximity to the Little Rock, Chanarambie and Kanaranzi creeks. Other potential areas would be the areas adjacent to Lake Bella and Lake Ocheda.

Lake Ocheda. The eastern basin of Lake Ocheda is currently home to many different kinds of waterfowl. Presently, the Area Wildlife Manager estimates that this particular basin is used by up to 5,000 Canadian geese and 10,000 to 25,000 mallards during migration times. Plus, a flock of nearly 1,500 Canadian Geese calls this basin home. Presently, pressure has begun to mount concerning the development of Lake Ocheda. Several reasons exist as to why the County should not give in to these pressures. Not only will the proposed housing developments devalue the area in terms of a hunting resource, but it will negatively affect the overall wildlife habitat that the area supports. Bird populations, such as those listed above, provide hunting opportunities in fields around the refuge as well as pass shootings at the margins of the refuge. Also, lawns make excellent grazing areas for geese and with the new abundance of lawns, the increased attraction of geese will result. This alone will create many nuisances including the undesirable messes that these geese leave behind.

The middle basin is much too shallow to be considered adequate for residential development as the deeper portions of this area reach average depths of only 2.5 feet. This limits the lake's ability in terms of recreational use. Residential development would be based more on the lakes aesthetic features than its recreation capacity. With new developments occurring, the existence of these aesthetic features would be placed in jeopardy.

While the western most basin of Ocheda is deeper, allowing it to support a wider range of activities, the fact remains that the rest of the lake is fairly shallow. In allowing housing developments on the western portion of the lake, lakeshore owners may eventually begin to request that the lake be dredged in order to accommodate their needs. Dredging is not only expensive, with costs to be borne mainly by the county, but it also upsets the present ecological balance within the lake. Careful consideration and deliberation must occur before development is allowed on Lake Ocheda. Assurances (or an established policy) of no dredging may be required before any development plans are offered or considered.

As mentioned above, in order to ensure adequate amounts of water for human consumption within Nobles County, the City of Worthington's source water protection plan should be finalized. This way, water bodies such as lakes and streams will be protected from various risks. Housing density within developments located along waterways should be further minimized in order to protect water bodies from the dangers of on-site sewage disposal. The shoreland standards that were instituted in the 1970's were a major step forward during that time, but future densities within developments should be lessened due to the fact that sooner or later septic systems will fail.

Missouri River Basin Riparian Corridors. Presently, little development pressure exists along the Little Rock, Kanaranzi Creek or Chanarambie Creek corridors. This is due to several factors. First, these areas lie within designated flood plain areas that restrict development. Second, most of these areas are designated as an agricultural preservation area, which limits its use further. Finally, shoreland-zoning regulations should continue to provide the area with assurances that the blocks of permanent vegetation will continue to remain protected. Potential development that the area may incur could be in the form of agriculture. However, due to the conditional use process that is in place in Nobles County, the threat of increased livestock production, mainly in the form of confinement buildings, can be minimized. This way, aquatic life and continued livestock production can continue to co-exist.

Wildlife Management Areas. Care should be taken to not encroach upon WMA's throughout Nobles County. WMA's often attract housing developments due to their ability to provide wide-open scenic areas and provide distances between other developments and agricultural activities. Another development problem being faced by WMA's is the construction of feedlots and other livestock producing facilities. Public hunting opportunities are limited with these forms of encroachment on wildlife areas due to animals choosing not to take cover in close proximity to man made developments. Reasonable setbacks should be developed in order to limit the amount of conflict that may arise.

Corridor Management and Development

Two different types of corridors, transportation and riparian, provide wildlife with a continuous string of habitat.

Transportation Corridors. As mentioned above, rights-of-way surrounding the railroads within Nobles County provide the County with essential prairie remnants. This, in turn, provides a functional wildlife habitat. However, these corridors are threatened by herbicide drift from agricultural practices. The use of chemicals from farming operations may blow onto the corridor and potentially kill beneficial wildlife habitat. Also, abandoned railroad ties left along the rail lines make the use of fire to keep up the vitality of the prairie an unsafe choice. This leads to the additional use of chemicals to control unwanted weeds and further destruction of the prairie remnants may result. As part owner of the Minnesota Southern Railway, it would be in Nobles County's best interest to continue to work not only with this Railroad, but also the Union Pacific Railroad and the DNR in order to provide proper management of all railroad corridors.

Road corridors provide efficient, continuous habitat as well. Proper policies regarding allowable mowing and spraying dates, as well as proper vegetation management, will allow many different types of bird species time to nest. This will have positive effects on bird populations such as pheasants and mallard ducks living within these corridors.

Riparian Corridors. Riparian corridors are vital to the survivability of the Topeka Shiner found in the Missouri River Basin (the western portion of Nobles County). The Topeka Shiner is currently on the Federal Endangered Species list. These riparian corridors also make up the most substantial amount of natural vegetative covering in the County. A large portion of these corridors are located on private lands, so if the Topeka Shiner is to be protected, a great deal of cooperation will be required from the individual landowners. However, the corridors are also tied into aquifer protection and possibly source water protection and watershed management. This means there should be a great deal of importance placed on these corridors.

Park and Recreation Resources

As mentioned in the Infrastructure and County Facilities Section, there are eight County owned parks and numerous city and township parks located throughout Nobles County. These parks provide just a few of the recreational opportunities available in the County. Other sources for recreation activities are the many conservation areas listed above. These areas provide recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, hiking and bird watching.

In Nobles County, Lake Okabena is the most popular body of water for recreational use. Since it is located in the City of Worthington, Lake Okabena's close proximity to a large population has allowed it to become a popular spot for water skiing, pleasure boating, and fishing.

Nobles County also contains 165 miles of Grant-in-Aid registered snowmobile trails. There are also three golf courses in Nobles County, they are the Prairie View Golf Links in Worthington, the Worthington Country Club and the Adrian Golf Course.

YMCA

The Worthington YMCA is an excellent source of recreation in the County for young and old alike. The YMCA offers many recreation activities including a swimming pool. Currently, the Worthington Area YMCA and its strategic partners are considering the construction of a new facility. Their goal is to explore the positives and potential negatives of constructing a new community facility. This new facility would provide space and affordable programming for its diverse and multi-aged group of users. Community meetings are presently being held in order to attain input on what type of facility should be built to accommodate all residents in the county from infants to seniors.

Trails

The Southwest Minnesota Regional Trails Plan (2000) identified recent studies that show the use of outdoor trail systems is on the rise. According to a 1990 Harris poll, it was estimated that 73% of adults in the US walked outdoors, most notably for exercise. It is also believed that local economies receive stimulation when communities respond to the needs of trail users. Nobles County should encourage the development of trails and trail heads within its borders, as well as trail connections with those of neighboring counties.

Potential Trailheads identified in the Regional Trails Plan within Nobles County are shown in the Map Section (Map #24) and include the following (an asterisk indicates an existing trail):

- 59/60 Travel Information Center
- Adrian Springs
- Bigelow
- Fury's Island*
- Indian Lake
- Lake Bella
- Lismore
- Maka Oicu*
- Midway County Park
- Lake Ocheda*
- Lake Okabena*
- Org
- Prairie Expo (Worthington)
- Round Lake (City)
- Sunrise Prairie Park
- Worthington

Presently in Nobles County, three recreation trails exist, they are:

- Olson Park Trail – This is a 1.1-mile paved, off road pedestrian/bicycle trail following the Lake Okabena shore in the City of Worthington.
- Lakeshore Trail – This is a 1/3 mile paved, off-road pedestrian/bicycle trail following the Lake Okabena shore in the City of Worthington.
- Fury's Island and Maka Oicu – These County Parks are located at Graham Lakes. The park road serves as a walking and biking route.

The following are the future trail developments for Nobles County:

- Worthington to CSAH 13 near Rushmore – Within the next five years, there will be an eight mile, hard surface off-road trail for bicyclists, in-line skaters and walkers. The trail will be the first of three segments connecting Worthington, Rushmore and Adrian to the west County line along a parallel path to County Highway 35. This proposed trail will be funded in part through Federal Surface Transportation Enhancement dollars.
- Adrian to West County Line – Within five to ten years, there will be a six mile, hard surface off-road trail for bicyclists, in-line skaters and walkers. The trail will connect Adrian to the west County line along a parallel path to County Highway 35. Points of interest that this trail will access are the Adrian Campground and the Adrian Spring.
- CSAH 35 near Rushmore to Adrian – Within five to ten years, there will be a six mile hard surface off road trail for bicyclists, in-line skaters and walkers. The trail will connect Adrian to Rushmore and complete the Worthington to west County line link along a parallel path to County Highway 35.

Potential Corridors for Pedestrian and Bicycle or multiuse trails and routes include (as identified in the 1999 planning process and January 2000 comment period of the Regional Trails Plan):

- Worthington to Luverne
- Adrian Springs to Lismore
- Tie Worthington/Prairie Expo to Fulda/Graham Lakes/Talcot Lake Area
- Round Lake/Lake Ocheda/Indian Lake/Lake Bella Area
- Along the Wind Turbine Corridor

NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL 1: Monitor and protect all vital natural resources such as water, soil, and air, from improper development and/or deterioration.
(related goals/objectives: Residential 1)

Objective: Continue to develop plans for safeguarding all natural resources in the County such as Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's), wildlife inhabited corridors and lakeshores.

Policies

1. Develop an environmental education program designed to encourage the safe and responsible uses of all recreational areas.

2. Develop the best possible management practices in order to reduce air pollution, limit soil erosion and improve surface water quality.
3. Prohibit lakeshore development in areas not well suited for it or in areas being used for public water supply (Lake Bella).

Strategies

1. Maintain and increase the water quality in the region.
2. Continue to enforce all zoning, feedlot and Individual Sewage Treatment Systems (ISTS) regulations through the Nobles County Environmental office.

GOAL 2: Protect and improve all ground and surface waters.
(related goals/objectives: Residential 1; Economic Development 2)

Objective: Promote growth and new developments away from sensitive water supply areas.

Policies

1. Strengthen land use standards.
2. Create and follow the best possible management practices in order to increase the quality of surface water.
3. Ensure proper enforcement and updating of zoning regulations regarding the placement of feedlots and manure storage areas in order to protect surrounding watersheds and drinking water sources.
4. Support source water and wellhead protection planning by all public water suppliers.
5. Identify source water protection areas.
6. Encourage landowners to upgrade their septic systems.

Strategies

1. Continue to update shoreland zoning ordinance as needed.
2. Continue to enforce and update all zoning regulations concerning environmental affairs.
3. Ensure adequate manpower to carry out enforcement.
4. Develop a safe drinking water public education program.
5. Work with agencies and special interest groups that support this goal.
6. Promote agricultural BMP's (Best Management Practices).

GOAL 3: Promote public health, economic development and community infrastructure by insuring a high quality drinking water supply for all residents of the community.
(related goals/objectives: Economic Development 2)

Objective: Support source water/wellhead protection planning for all public water suppliers.

Policies

1. Develop a safe drinking water public education program that includes brochures, newspaper articles (consumer confidence reports) and informational signing which identifies wellhead protection boundaries.
2. Promote an educational event on the topic of groundwater/surface water protection theme on a regular basis.
3. Continue to use land use planning and implementation controls to ensure water and wellhead protection of public water supplies.

Strategies

1. Modify local controls to include language under specific conditions for conditional uses or requirements under permitted uses which place obligations on the developer and the owner-operator in a source water protection area to follow land management practices which are identified as best management practices or other management strategies of a source water/wellhead protection plan.
2. Provide a cost-share for the sealing of unused wells in wellhead protection areas.
3. Support the Federal Legislature to develop and implement the Lewis and Clark Water Project in order to provide a supplemental water source to the County.
4. Support the efforts of the Water Exploration Task Force in order to provide a rural water service to all areas of the County.

GOAL 4: Provide an awareness of the importance of drinking water protection to the general health and well being of the County's residents.

Objective: To maintain groundwater nitrate levels at a point which is significantly less than the drinking water standard of 10 parts per million.

Policies

1. Assist with financial support for the purchase of development rights in vulnerable wellhead protection priority areas.
2. Implement appropriate best management practices to protect surface and groundwater.

Strategies

1. Conduct regular (annual) screening clinics for testing private wells for nitrates.
2. Contact local Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program participants for the purpose of awareness and testing of a safe drinking water supply.
3. Implement fertilizer management practices in both municipalities and in agricultural applications.

PARK AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

GOAL 1: Maintain and upgrade existing park and recreational facilities.

Objective: Increase attendance at all recreation areas and continually monitor for signs of dilapidation and deprivation.

Policies

1. Market all appropriate recreation areas to residents and tourists.
2. Preserve and protect all existing recreational uses throughout the County.
3. Work with all potential funding sources such as the DNR in order to provide useful recreational activities.

Strategies

1. Consider any possibilities of expanding current park areas.
2. Develop a County website possibly focussing on the marketing of the area.
3. Research the costs and benefits to paving roads to parks in order to increase park usage.

GOAL 2: Further the development of the recreational trail system throughout Nobles County.

(related goals/objectives: Infrastructure and County Facilities 5)

Objective: To promote hiking, biking, walking and jogging on the County's trails enhancing the recreational uses within the County.

Policies

1. Continue to develop multi-modal trails to be linked throughout the County.
2. Enhance and promote all areas affected by the trail system.
3. Connect all trails to each other and other existing attractions such as parks and local attractions.

Implementation/Strategies

1. Initiate a County Trails Committee to develop a County-wide Trails Plan.
2. Identify viable trail projects that link facilities (Trail Heads).
3. Seek funding assistance through various local, state and federal resources.