

CULTURE & RECREATION

OVERVIEW—COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Although Kent County has participated in a cooperative extension program since 1912, no formal documentation establishing the program was located. Through the budget process, the County has provided funding for administrative and support staff salaries, space, and administrative costs (e.g. equipment, supply, travel, training, etc.) for County and Michigan State University (MSU)-provided coordinator, educators, and para-professional staff and programs of the Cooperative Extension. As in other counties throughout the state, the Cooperative Extension Service is a county department, headed by a Michigan State University Extension District Coordinator who functions as a county department director.

In 2010, MSU began the process of standardizing the services they offer as well as the manner in which they negotiated with counties for specific services. As a result, MSU has restructured the Cooperative Extension services to reflect a more regional focus on four Educational Program Institutes which focus on the following:

- Enhancing Michigan's First Green Industry: Agriculture & Agribusiness
- Preparing Michigan's Children & Youth for the Future
- Greening Michigan: Leveraging Natural and Human Assets for Prosperity
- Improving the Health & Nutrition of Michigan's residents

Based upon the new program/institute structure at MSU, the County and MSU entered into a five year agreement (2012-2016) and will jointly develop an annual workplan which stipulates the services that will be provided. Under the terms of the new agreement, counties pay a standardized assessment based upon a formula which includes a base amount and is population based. While the terms of the agreement are subject to an annual appropriation by the County, MSU will provide 4-H Programming with staffing levels based on per capita formula developed by MSU; operating expenses (supplies, training, postage copies, etc.) for 4-H and other educators assigned to or serving Kent County; access to all MSU-paid educators; supervision of educators assigned to or serving in the County, as well as County-provided clerical, and annual reporting. The County provides office space, utilities, landlines, and internet connectivity as well as one administrative staff person.

Since counties are not required to support a Cooperative Extension program, and since specific Kent/MSU Extension initiatives do not require and thus do not receive review or approval by the Board of Commissioners, except where the County has agreed to serve as the fiduciary for certain grant-funded programs of the Extension Office, the County's support for these programs is considered discretionary.

Cooperative Extension

Function	Mandated						Non-Mandated							
	Statute	Fully Funded	Un-Funded	Partially Funded			Board Authorized Agreement	Board Resolution	Necessary	Discretionary	Funding Source			
				Designated State/Feds	User Fees / Fines	Other					Gen. Fund.	User Fees	State/Fed Grant	Other
Provide office space, equipment, and support staff for County Extension office		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Agriculture and Agribusiness Institute														
Promote best practices in agriculture and natural resources management through education and training programs		<input type="checkbox"/>	11-17-11-108		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Children and Youth Institute														
Provide educational/leadership programs for youth		<input type="checkbox"/>	11-17-11-108		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Greening Michigan Institute														
Provide financial education programs		<input type="checkbox"/>	11-17-11-108		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Provide programming and information to expand local food production and distribution		<input type="checkbox"/>	11-17-11-108		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Health and Nutrition Institute														
Develop and administer programs for children, youth, and families in nutrition, food safety, resource management, and youth development		<input type="checkbox"/>	11-17-11-108		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Kent County Agricultural Preservation														
Provide Administrative Support to Agricultural Preserve Board		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

OVERVIEW – JOHN BALL PARK AND ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

The Board of Commissioners approved, in concept, the purchase of John Ball Park and Zoo from the City of Grand Rapids in September 1986; a final agreement containing all the terms and conditions of the transfer was approved on June 3, 1987.

During its more than 100-year history, animal care has remained the primary function of the zoo, however, expansion of functions and development of the zoological industry has resulted in construction of new exhibits, diversification of the living collection and the addition of various programs (e.g. education and conservation). What has resulted from the function of performing the animal care are research and conservation activities that contribute to the base of knowledge about wildlife, conservation, and education. These services are considered discretionary.

Although the Zoo is not required to evaluate its programs and activities regularly, it does so as a part of the accreditation process with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), engage in a rigorous evaluation of the facilities, programs, and collections. Planning, implementation and maintenance of the living collection and zoo programs is done based upon a regularly updated Master Plan developed in cooperation with the John Ball Zoological Society and adopted by the Board of Commissioners. The John Ball Zoological Garden Vision and General Development Plan was last updated and adopted in 2005 and recognizes the Zoo as a vital community asset that a) offers a sense of community pride; b) contributes to the local economy; c) preserves the educational features of the Zoo; d) preserves the ongoing commitment toward conservation; and e) provides ongoing and improved recreational opportunities for the community.

Animal care functions are required to conform to the licensing standards of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for institutions displaying live animals. Programs involving endangered species are further regulated by rules promulgated by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Additionally, the Zoo is required to secure permits from various state, federal and international agencies including the U.S. Department of the Interior in order to obtain, exhibit and breed certain species. Each permit carries specific requirements for that species which the Zoo must implement to retain the permit. For the purposes of this report, it was not considered necessary to document the requirements for the specific care activities; they have been categorized as necessary.

Other functions of the Zoo, such as post-mortem examination of animals are a necessary part of the care and support of zoo animals. Information gained from post-mortem evaluations as well as participation in research, education programs and conservation programs support the zoo's mission to "help individuals gain information about, respect for, and an understanding of the Animal Kingdom."

John Ball Zoological Garden

Function	Mandated						Non-Mandated							
	Statute	Fully Funded	Un-Funded	Partially Funded			Board Authorized Agreement	Board Resolution	Necessary	Discretionary	Funding Source			
				Designated State/Feds	User Fees / Fines	Other					Gen. Fund.	User Fees	State/Fed Grant	Other
Animal Care														
Care for and house zoo animals		<input type="checkbox"/>	6-3-87(A)	9-86-137 3-87-54	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Conduct post-mortem examinations on deceased animals		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Plan for, implement, and maintain new "living collections"		<input type="checkbox"/>		Resolutions are made on a project-by-project basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Conservation and Research														
Conduct conservation and research projects		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Education														
Implement on-site and off-site educational functions for teachers, students, and public at the zoo		<input type="checkbox"/>		10-90-150	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Entertainment and Recreation														
Maintain John Ball Park		<input type="checkbox"/>	6-3-87 (A)	9-86-137 3-87-54	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Plan and implement special events		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

OVERVIEW – PARKS

Public Act 90 of 1913 designated County Road Commissioners, under the authority of a county's Board of Supervisors, to also serve as the county's Board of Park Trustees. By this Act, the Board of Park Trustees was authorized to acquire, develop, maintain and operate a county park system. In Kent County, the then Board of Supervisors advanced this effort by creating a special committee in 1923 to work with its Board of Park Trustees to study and plan a system of county parks. With the establishment of Gordon Park as the first county park in 1924, Kent County began a long term program of acquiring, developing and managing county parkland. In 2001, with reinvigorated interest in the acquisition of land for open space preservation and park operations, the County Board of Commissioners adopted a Parks Subcommittee report with recommendations to bring the County Parks system under the control of County government. Under Public Act 156 of 1917, Kent County Parks was established as a County department.

Throughout the history of the Kent County's park system, the County Board of Commissioners has exercised its authority to approve the acquisition and development of parkland on a project by project basis. Operation of the golf course and campground were authorized when the Board approved these projects in 1963 and 1974, respectively.

The State of Michigan requires the county park system to maintain and update a five-year master plan to be eligible to receive State grant funds for acquisition and development; as such, the planning process is considered necessary. Administration of a reservation system to schedule the use of the system is considered a discretionary activity of the department.

Parks

Function	Mandated						Non-Mandated							
	Statute	Fully Funded	Un-Funded	Partially Funded			Board Authorized Agreement	Board Resolution	Necessary	Discretionary	Funding Source			
				Designated State/Feds	User Fees / Fines	Other					Gen. Fund.	User Fees	State/Fed Grant	Other
Campground														
Operate the County campground		<input type="checkbox"/>		6-5-74	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Golf Courses														
Operate the County golf course		<input type="checkbox"/>		8-7-63	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Parks														
Acquire land for parks and trails		<input type="checkbox"/>		X Resolutions made on a project-by- project basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Develop and administer reservation system for County Parks		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Develop park land and trails		<input type="checkbox"/>		X Resolutions made on a project-by- project basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Maintain and operate parks, trails, and facilities		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Prepare and update Parks plan		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				