

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 jointly develop an annual work plan 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 provides: 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.

The MSU Cooperative Extension staff also provide support to the Agricultural Preservation Board and oversight of the County's Agricultural Preservation (Purchase of Development Rights – PDR) program.

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
Provide office space, equipment, and support staff for County Extension office		<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"/>				
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. In December 2013 the Board of Commissioners approved a lease and operating agreement with the John Ball Zoo Corporation - a 501c3 non-profit corporation. In the agreement the County maintains ownership of the land and provides funding to the JBZ Corp. to partially fund Zoo operations. In return, the JBZ Corp. has “stepped into the shoes” of the County and is responsible for maintenance, animal care, accreditation, and other functions previously handled by the County. The lease and operating agreement requires the JBZ Corp. to report to the County regarding compliance with mandated responsibilities.

During its more than 100-year history, animal care has remained the primary function of the zoo. 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 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. Animal care also includes post-mortem evaluations (necropsies); information gained from necropsies, 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
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"/>				
Conduct post-mortem examinations on deceased animals	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input 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 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 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"/>				
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"/>				
Plan and implement special events	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input 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, and established the County Parks Department under Public Act 156 of 1917.

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 point of sale and reservation system to schedule the use of the parks and accept and process payments that annually support more than 40% of the department's operations budget 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
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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>					