



2021 Annual Report

Thornapple Area Parks & Recreation Commission
Planning for our Future

Letter from the Director

This year we saw a return to organized play! My crew celebrated on the ball field, trails and many other places in our growing community. We welcomed so many familiar faces. We ran into a few road bumps as we figure out life during a pandemic but we chose to focus on the good. When we look around our community, we are grateful for the natural landscape that afforded us healthy pauses, and we are grateful for the people who have rallied around our town to make it a great place to do life. Together we have come together to serve our growing community through recreation. One prime example that took off this year is planning Sheridan Park. The initial conceptual planning is complete and we are moving on to figure out how we implement another gem in the center of our town. Keep reading to learn more! Or catch up with me anytime.

~ Emily Dock, Director



Our History

The Thornapple Area Parks & Recreation Commission (TAPRC) was established on February 23, 2000 by Thornapple Kellogg Schools, Thornapple Township and the Village of Middleville. The governing board is made up of 3 representatives from each of the founding entities. The commission traditionally has met monthly and with the help of a part-time director plans programs and events for the community.



MISSION

Thornapple Area Parks & Recreation Commission provides all people with the opportunity to be active through affordable, safe and healthy recreational activities.

VISION

Get Active. Stay Active.

2021 Board Members

Thornapple Kellogg School Representatives

Brian Hammer

Anne Hamming, Secretary

Nick Iveson

Thornapple Township Representatives

Catherine Getty, Chair

Jeff Kenyon

Eric Schaefer

Village of Mddleville Representatives

Tom DeVries

Tom Hamilton, Treasurer

Jacki Schneider, Vice Chair

Director, Emily Dock

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

January 7

February 4

March 4

April 1

May 6

June 3

July 1 - CANCELED

August 11

September 2 - CANCELED

October 7

November 4

December 2 - CANCELED

Finances

Funding for TAPRC comes largely from:

- The Barry County United Way - \$10,300
- Entity Contributions - \$4,500 each
- Registration Fees
- Program Sponsors

TAPRC employs a part-time Director but depends primarily on volunteer coaches, parents and community support to provide recreation opportunities.



\$4,300+ worth of cans! Our Charity Shed continues to be a hot spot for can and bottle returns. We will soon have a new location! In spring of 2022, you will find it in the back corner of the Middle School Parking Lot!

An Exceptional Year: Sponsors & Grants

Our community came through in a big way in 2021! We had a sponsor for all of our 30 baseball and softball teams. We even had our first ever Health Partner -- Spectrum Health Pennock walked alongside us to help keep our players and coaches safe and healthy. We also had a number of grants that provided us the opportunity to run a quality programs.

- Thornapple Area Enrichment Foundation gave two grants. One grant helped us purchase a new batting cage. The second grant was for COVID relief and helped us purchase extra equipment and cleaning supplies.
- Barry Community Foundation YAC Grant helped us kick off the first phase of our Sheridan Park Plans.

United Way Partnership

Our core funding comes from the Barry County United Way. Each year TAPRC applies for support, which can vary based on funding levels and the needs of other agency throughout the county. United Way dollars provide support for scholarships to cover player registrations fees, provide affordable registration fees for all players and provide equipment upgrades.

TAPRC traditionally participates in the United Way Day of Caring, and other opportunities as they are available.

THANK YOU BARRY COUNTY UNITED WAY!



Programming

Spring 2021 we returned to the ball fields! Nearly 350 youth participate in baseball and softball.

- We ran a new T-ball model that allowed 75 kids the opportunity to learn skills and drills. 8 teams took over Crane Ball Fields on Saturdays and played other in-house teams.
- We had 230+ youth (ages 8-14) participate in the TriComm League with Wayland, Hopkins, Dorr and Martin.
- We had 27 boys play on a Select Travel Baseball Team (12U & 14U), which is an opportunity to play ball at a more competitive level.
- We had 10 girls play in a Middle School Softball League for the first time.



Programming cont.

Partnering with TK Athletics!

- Our Athletic Director & Varsity Baseball Coach are part of the TAPRC Board. They helped to:
 - Develop an online coaches training manual.
 - Run a series of free skills nights for program kids.
 - Build our travel baseball program.
 - Create a plan to upgrade a full-size ball field on school property that can be jointly used.
 - Develop winter training
- Our Varsity Softball Coach helped to:
 - Develop an online coaches training manual.
 - Create a Middle School softball program.
 - Develop a camp for young girls to learn skills and drills.
 - Develop winter training

Current Facilities:

TAPRC manages the Crane Road Ballfield Complex, a 12-acre complex owned by the Village of Middletown. It consists of 3 fields, 2 storage sheds and a parking area. TAPRC provides portable restrooms from April through July. Security at the fields continues to be an issue.

TAPRC is also fortunate enough to have access to 2 fields owned by TK Schools. However, we lost 2 other fields due to construction and building expansion.

Programming cont.

- We partnered with Middleville Youth Football (MYF) and TK Football in an effort to unite the program K-12. More than 85 kids played flag football, which contributed to nearly 200 youth learning the game!
- We returned to the trail with our annual 5K/10K run. This added dozens of community members to the beloved Heritage Days celebration downtown.



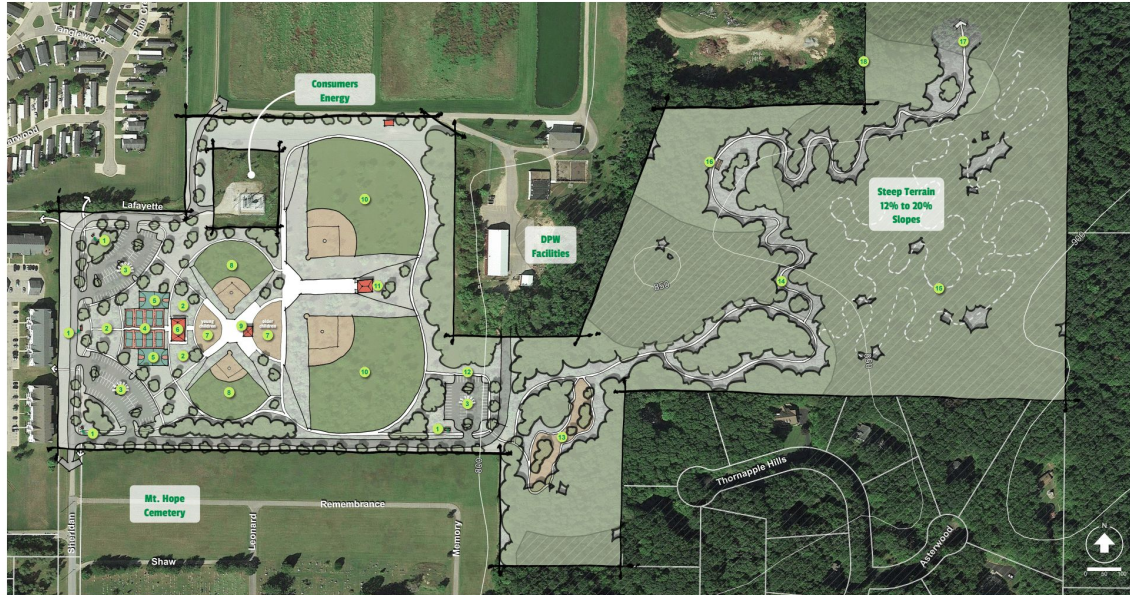
Park planning for our future...

We came into 2021 with a firm foundation built on over 20 years leading park and recreation efforts in the Middleville area. The year prior we updated our community's 5-year recreation plan, created our first ever Strategic Plan, and a rebrand of our TAPRC logo. With these pieces in place we were able to hire Williams & Works and draft a plan for a new park, preliminarily termed "Sheridan Park."

Sheridan Park would be located in the Village of Middleville adjacent to Thorn-Barry Apartments, Cider Mill Village, Mt. Hope Cemetery and the Village's wastewater treatment plant. This is an important project, not only as our need for new ball fields is critical but to serve our growing community recreational needs. Our current facilities at the Crane Ball Field Complex are built on a reclaimed landfill that prohibits upgrading the fields -- no irrigation, no bathrooms or buildings can be built on the premises. Because of this, our youth baseball and softball players lack a safe and reliable place to play ball.

The other elements of the park are necessary to support a growing surrounding community. Amenities include two basketball courts, a big playground, pickleball courts and nature and mountain bike trails. The overall design will serve neighboring residents and the community as a whole. The new park will increase the quality of life for the Middleville area as well as be a regional park destination. (PIC ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

Park planning continued



Sheridan Community Park Conceptual Design

Map Key

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 Park Sign | 8 Basketball | 16 Bathroom/Concessions | 17 Adventure Course | 27 Future Connection to North Country Trail |
| 2 Picnic Area | 9 Park Pavilion | 17 Ballfield (90' Bases) | 18 Multi-Modal Trails | 28 DPW Fencing |
| 3 Parking | 10 Playground | 18 Maintenance | 19 Mountain Bike Trails | |
| 4 Pickleball Courts | 11 Ballfield (60' Bases) | 19 Trail Head | 20 Forest Overlook | |



williams&works

December 22, 2021

Our Future

As we plan for our community's future we've created a fund that we can build together. The [TAPRC Endowment Fund](#) was created in partnership with the Thornapple Area Enrichment Foundation, an affiliate of the Barry Community Foundation. A gift today will help us grow the future of parks and rec right here in our backyard!

