

## **STATE PARKS ROUND TABLE FORUM**

State parks are in a dire situation when it comes to funding. Representing Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana, participants in this forum spoke of money problems and trouble with long governmental processes when it comes to the parks in their states. Current sources of funding were discussed as well as potential future sources, and opinions on the expected success of each of these were also given by the forum attendees. However, bleak the current situation, there was expressed hope for changes to be made for the better.

## **MUNICIPAL PARKS FORUM**

The members of this forum introduced themselves and described their job positions. They then discussed recent projects in their areas of work and the development of trails including types of surfaces and users. Other topics included the uses of baseball diamonds surfaces and LED lights. They discuss continued on to camera surveillance and the positive and negative side effects of them.

## **COUNTY AND REGIONAL PARKS ROUND TABLE**

During this session park managers and other park employees discussed various topics related to their parks. The financial problems that parks are facing were a universal theme. County and metro parks near Detroit are especially impacted due to the losses the U.S. auto industry has been facing. All parks in the Great Lakes area are cutting back on seasonal staff; some park managers' worry they may have to cut back on full time staff. If the economic situation does not improve park managers may be short on equipment and materials vital to sustaining recreational and ecological standards.

Geocaching is another topic discussed at this meeting. Park visitors use GPS to conduct scavenger hunts. This can sometimes present problems because park visitor will enter areas that are sensitive to human impacts. One of the ways to reduce the likelihood these impacts would be to have the park conduct its own scavenger hunts.

This eventually led to the discussion of parks and carrying capacity. Many of the parks use hoses that lay across the road to count the number of cars that enter the park. Some parks use pressure plates that are in the pavement to count the number of vehicles that enter the park. One park in Ohio even uses cameras to not only count cars, but also to track where park patrons are traveling from. This is as far as the carrying capacity topic went; no one discussed the impacts that park visitors have on their facilities.

At the end, some managers spoke briefly about natural resource projects their parks were developing. Parks along Lake Michigan are focusing on wetlands restoration and the development of wildlife corridors.