



## Media Contact

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## **25 Years of Growth: Washtenaw County Bids Farewell to Parks Director Coy Vaughn**

*Ann Arbor, MI:* The Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) will be losing a dynamic parks leader with the retirement later this month of County Park's Director, Coy Vaughn. His contributions and commitment over the past 25+ years have made a significant impact on Washtenaw County's parks, natural areas, and the Border to Border Trail (B2B Trail).

Coy's interest and passion for parks and trails began in the 1990's. Early in his career, he worked for the Livingston County planning department and then went on to work for the planning department at the City of Ann Arbor. He took a position with WCPARC in 2007 to lead the planning team and became the Director in 2017. Vaughn oversees a department of 57 full-time staff and about 375 seasonal employees. Under his leadership, the park system added two new parks (Staebler Farm County Park and Watkins Lake Preserve), and 15 more nature preserves throughout Washtenaw County. He has managed the development of master site plans for the primary county park facilities including: Pierce Lake Golf Course (Chelsea), Staebler Farm County Park and the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center (Ann Arbor), Rolling Hills Water Park (Ypsilanti), Watkins Lake Park and Preserve (Manchester), and Independence Lake County Park (Whitmore Lake). This past year, Vaughn and his team completed a Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategic Plan which provides the vision for the organization for the next several years.

In addition to his impact on preserving open space and overseeing a bustling park system, he has been a tireless advocate and leader in developing B2B Trail throughout Washtenaw County. Currently at 42 miles, the trail extends from Ypsilanti on the east side of the county to the Stockbridge area on the west side. His leadership on the B2B Trail includes:

- Expanding the B2B Trail from the original 34-mile trail route to an eventual 54-mile route by extending it further west into Chelsea, and beyond to Pinckney and Waterloo Recreation Areas through Lyndon Township.
- Facilitating the expansion of the trail by constructing 16 more miles with projects touching every jurisdiction of the trail including Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, the Metroparks, Dexter, and Chelsea.
- Providing leadership during the formation of WCPARC's non-profit partner, HWPI, which transformed the trajectory of the development of the trail.
- Supporting the creation of the Washtenaw County Road and Trails millage that allows essential tax-payer support of the trail.
- Created a special revenue fund to ensure the county has the necessary resources to maintain the B2B Trail for future generations.
- Established the Connecting Communities Grant Program, which has led to many significant projects including: Mill Creek Trail (Dexter), Zeeb Road Pathway (Scio Twp), Matthaei Botanical Gardens Trail (Ann Arbor Twp), the Dixboro Connector (Superior Twp), and the Lohr-Textile-Platt Greenways (Pittsfield Twp).

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When asked about his career and the impact he has had, Vaughn said one of the accomplishments he is most proud of is being a champion of protecting open space, natural areas, and farmland. Undoubtedly, his contributions to WCPARC and its residents will be felt for generations. Post retirement, he plans on spending his time enjoying the parks and preserves, traveling, golfing, and supporting the development of Main Street Park in Chelsea.

The WCPARC Board of Commissioners recently announced Meghan Bonfiglio, current WCPARC Chief Deputy Director, as the new Parks Director. She will begin her new role on June 30. Further details will be provided at a later date.

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