

**Statement by Nancy Wiegand on Jan. 10, 2024 regarding Indian Lake plan**



**Save the trail system at Indian Lake County park**

**Do not put in roads and pavement, Save the Land**

**Existing Trail system for skiing and hiking at Indian Lake:**

1. Is very popular. People do **not want any changes**. The proposal is the opposite of leaving the park 'as is', which people said they want.
2. Has '**established uses**' for over 30 (40?) years. Skiing and hiking are established uses.
3. People **pay to use the ski trails**. It's critical to have good trails.
4. The November 2023 YouTube video on Facebook for Indian Lake starts by saying the '**highlight of the park is the trail system**".
5. The new road(s) proposals put **pavement literally on top** of an existing trail. Re-location of that and other trails is unclear or even impossible. Allowing cars, exhaust, noise, etc. into the interior of the woods and trail system **destroys the peace that hikers and skiers need**, in addition to changing or eliminating the trails.

**What skiers need:**

6. **Trails in the woods**, so the snow keeps better and for scenery
7. **Not to have to cross roads or pavement**. There is nothing to paint on pavement that allows skiers to ski over it (as per a comment at last month's meeting). It is a big problem for skiers to cross pavement or

differences in snow cover.

8. Not to go under bridges. There is **no snow under a bridge**, nor can snow realistically be shoveled in repeatedly.

9. Skiers and hikers expect to leave a parking area and **be away from cars**, noise, and exhaust, rather than ski alongside such or have to cross, be in contact with, or see cars close by.

10. Skiers and hikers **need distance** to travel, i.e., as much mileage as possible. The woods and trail system aren't that big as it is. Skiers and hikers need to 'get away', 'be away'. The plan significantly negatively affects the trail system.

### **Other comments**

11. It is a common and old park issue, also for NPS and NFS, as to **where \*not\* to put roads** and development. Current realizations are to preserve land and **\*not\*** have people drive in. I advocate preserving the interior of park, so nature and people have as much room as possible. Parking should be only at the edges and not in the middle of the park.

12. Regarding the statement that people want to drive into the woods versus walking in, if the road and parking lot(s) are built, there will be no to little woods left. Re-building trails also destroys the woods. So, please **leave the trail system alone and intact**.

13. In this regard, I recommend the park **keeps the woods as woods** and does not turn it into oak savanna. Enough other areas are being cut, and, further, woods are the natural successor. Woods are the normal succession.

14. People driving into the old cabin area will destroy that area as a '**getting away spot**', which it currently is. Further, the small cabin and vault toilet will not be adequate for crowds.

15. The existence of a new road will result in lots of people driving in there whenever the gate is open (if there is a gate) just to see where the road goes and then, finding the lots are full, driving out again. There would be a **constant stream of cars**. Please do not build any new roads. Extra parking, now rarely needed, can be built closer to Hwy. 19.

16. **A bridge has no place** in the existing trail system. A road and bridge destroy the park, making it more urban. This isn't an urban park.

17. I'm personally **against a paved bike path** because it's not needed, bisects the trail system, bisects the woods, and further opens up the woods, which should stay intact ecologically and for people. Pavement is the antithesis of the current woods and rustic character of the park, which is what people seek.

18. I'm **opposed to another new shelter and parking lot** by the lake. Having more than one group at the same time in the park is too much. Also, I'm opposed to more pavement, and it destroys the view that people currently cherish for sunsets. Even if trees are planted, there is still a road toward the lake, etc.

## Comments sent to N. Wiegand from 9 Different Skiers

(Most of these comments were also sent to Chris James, as I was told)

1. I'm horrified to think of a paved road and vehicles running through this area. Trees, fields, etc. are disappearing and are being replaced with impermeable surfaces. There is no need to make a road and parking lot to a sledding hill. Cars have no place back in this area. I go in the back woods to get away from the noise. No motors! I am so sad that mankind seems to think the path to betterment is pavement and vehicles. Please do not touch this area.
2. This is a very popular destination for skiers in the area who enjoy the quiet natural area. Worried about car traffic in an area that is now a quiet area.
3. I say leave it alone. There are so many hikers that come weekly. Why change a good thing?
4. A road would also introduce car traffic into the heart of the forest to a facility now treasured for its semi-remoteness. There is also ecological disruption. I believe the park would be better served by leaving it as remote as possible. We have many options for roads and not very many for more remote feeling areas.
5. The plan for Indian Lake County Park is ill conceived, destructive and wasteful. It should be substantially revised. It is a beautiful park and a great place for hiking and skiing. To build a paved road (with a bridge no less) through one of the most scenic forests in the park is wasteful and destructive and serves no purpose. Building a paved parking lot as part of this road project makes even less sense. I've rarely seen the parking lot full. If overflow parking is needed, it can be constructed near the current parking lot.  
  
The current gravel road is adequate for scout camping groups. A Cub Scout leader, who has taken his troop camping there for many years, said the current arrangement works well.
6. If an accessible cabin is desired, it can be built by the existing parking lot. We need wild areas more than ever, as our lives become suburbanized and urbanized. I have seen trail use go up astronomically since the pandemic ended, this is good, but I believe we all experience wild areas as just substantially different from semi-wild ones. We breathe differently, we slow down, we are quieter, we work our bodies harder when the trails are rugged. Let's keep the compromises to wilderness small.
7. The paved bike trail from Indian Trail road to the bathrooms and water is not necessary in my opinion.
8. That part of the Indian Lake preserve has remained a relatively undisturbed 'wild' place for hiking, running, wildlife habitat, wildlife viewing, and quiet solitude - as well as a reminder of a historical Native American site - since pre-settlement days. A paved road would do irreparable harm to an irreplaceable local gem of nature.
9. I want to protect natural, quiet areas rather than enabling a built environment. I oppose new roads, a new bridge, and parking lot in Indian Lake County Park. I prefer that the county spend that money on

extending bike trails in other areas of the county.

If I become disabled before I die, I highly doubt that I will want natural, quiet areas motorized so that I can marginally enjoy them. I would like to think that I will still support keeping areas wild. Finally, there are all-terrain wheelchairs and perhaps ways for the scouts to wheel in people, which are not perfect solutions, but better than paving over more areas in my opinion.