



Friends of Clare County Parks and Recreation
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Friends of Clare Parks Sponsors Essay Contest and Chance for Students to Name County's Newest Park

Nine essay semi-finalist winners will each receive a \$25 gift certificate; student whose park name is chosen will receive an additional \$50 gift certificate.

Harrison, Michigan (February 9, 2012)...Clare County has a new park near Farwell but the park needs a name and Friends of Clare County Parks & Recreation, which holds title to the park, is sponsoring a contest asking students to name the new park and explain why they chose that particular name.

„Friends' is also asking students to write a short (less than 250 words) essay, as part of the contest, on why the county's parks are important to them. Nine students—three each from grades 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12—who write essays that best convey the reason Clare parks are important will each receive a \$25 gift certificate from Jay's Sporting Goods. The suggested park names, from the nine, will then be posted at the Gateway Affair, a Friends fundraiser, on June 2. Event attendees will be asked to pick the winning name, and the student whose park name is chosen will receive an additional \$50 Jay's gift certificate.

Deadline for entries is April 15 and the nine finalists will be notified by mid-May in the event their family or friends wish to attend the fundraiser.

Why both an essay and a naming contest? The reasons are twofold, according to Gerry Schmiedicke, president of the Friends group. "Everybody talks about the value of our parks for residents and tourists but we don't know what our young people look for and value in our county parks. The essay contest will help ensure that when we work with groups to improve parks and recreational opportunities in this county we also take into account what our young people are looking for," he said. "Secondly, the essay contest will help narrow the many entries we hope to receive to nine." Schmiedicke added the only reason students are being asked to submit an explanation with their park name is in the event the proposed name for the park is not easily recognized or understood.

Applications are available in Harrison schools and Friends is working with other local districts that may take part. Schmiedicke hopes some teachers will use the essay contest as a class assignment. Applications can also be picked up at the Pere-Marquette, Harrison and Surry Township libraries, or downloaded at the Friends website, clarecountyrecreation.org.

The park being named is just west of Farwell between the Pere-Marquette Rail Trail and Business-10. The property was donated by Isabella Bank to the group with the provision the property be available to the public. Plans call for picnic tables to be installed and possibly a

primitive campground. The Friends website also contains a link with more information on the proposed park.

Friends of Clare County Parks and Recreation is a qualified 501(c) 3 under the IRS code and supports the improvement of recreational opportunities throughout Clare County through events, activities and grants. To learn more about Friends, its goals and grant program, go to clarecountyrecreation.org

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