

FINAL DELIVERABLE

Title	Boone Forks Regional Marketing Plan
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Community Partners	Webster County Conservation, City of Webster City

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The University of Iowa Marketing Institute

Boone Forks Regional Plan Final Executive Summary

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Project Description:

The team from the Marketing Institute has been working with Matt Cosgrove from the Webster County Conservation in coordination with The University of Iowa Office of Outreach and Engagement to create a framework for a marketing campaign promoting the Boone Forks area to the residents of the Hamilton, Boone, and Webster counties. The goal of this project was to create a marketing plan and branding strategy to promote the various state and county parks in the three counties while highlighting the opportunities for outdoor activities.

Project Scope

The following section consists of the agreed upon scope and deliverables by the Marketing Institute Team and Matt Cosgrove before the start of the engagement:

MI consulting will include:

- Secondary research on the current demographics and lifestyle habits of residents in the Hamilton, Boone, and Webster counties.
- Primary research on awareness levels of the Boone Forks Region and responses to proposed marketing materials.
- Framework of the marketing campaign for the Boone Forks region that includes a website template, consumer profiles, and social media strategy.
- Creation and proposal of a new logo and tagline which encompasses the joint efforts of the Boone, Hamilton, and Webster counties.
- Content for website, social media, and other marketing materials which will promote general information of the Boone Forks area, the various activities available and tour ideas, and the importance of protecting the environment and rivers.

Deliverables

- Methodology and results of primary and secondary research findings.
- Marketing plan and branding strategy which includes proposed website template, social media strategy, and other marketing materials.
- Recommendations for a roll-out campaign.
- Weekly email updates from team leader.

Engagement Summary

The Boone Forks Regional Plan project was presented to the Marketing Institute Team in August of 2018. The first phase of the engagement occurred in the Fall Semester where consultants gathered secondary research from various databases, competitors, and in-person visits that provided a background of the Boone Forks area and recreational habits of the population as a whole. The secondary research gathered by the Marketing Institute team allowed consultants to gain a deeper understanding of the Boone Forks region and how to effectively create an effective marketing campaign. The Marketing Institute team gave its first presentation to the Marketing Institute Advisory Board in November, 2018 where it received beneficial feedback when work continued in the 2019 spring semester.

After winter break, the Marketing Institute Team continued work on the project which was focused on conducting primary research. In coordination with Matt Cosgrove, the Marketing Institute Team constructed a survey that aimed to gather data from residents in Boone, Hamilton, and Webster counties. The survey focused on the level of awareness of parks and activities in the Boone Forks region, how residents spend their free time, recreational activities of interest, and preferred means of marketing communications. The survey was disseminated through various organizations in team by Matt Cosgrove and members of the community. As a result, the Marketing Institute Team received over 350 respondents which helped to further shape our marketing plan and final recommendations. In addition, during the second semester, the Marketing Institute Team began designing the deliverables including the website, logo and tagline, and other marketing materials. The team hired a freelance graphic designer to assist in the creation of the logo, mock-Facebook page, and brochure. After completing work on the deliverables and presentation, the Marketing Institute Team presented for a second time to faculty and board members to further receive feedback on the marketing plan.

This executive summary will present the findings from the Marketing Institute Team's secondary and primary research along with the implication and findings for each one. In addition, the report will include full survey results, a branding guide for the logo and tagline, and the username and password for the website template. For any questions after the project is completed, please contact Peggy Stover, director of the Marketing Institute.

Problem Statement:

The Marketing Institute Team identified the following problem statement for the Boone Forks region:

"The lack of awareness of Boone Fork's recreational activities and conservation initiatives for the Tri-County parks region has led to a lack of participation and support from residents of the surrounding areas.

Our goal is to increase civilian awareness, participation, and support from the three counties. We plan to do this by highlighting the various outdoor activities, educational resources, and recreational areas of Boone Forks under one cohesive marketing campaign."

Phase #1: Secondary Research

Key Finding #1

According to a Mintel Research study regarding outdoor activity, younger adults with a household income of \$50 - 99.9K are most likely to participate in active outdoor activities.

Source: Mintel. (2017). *Outdoor Enthusiasts - US - March 2017*. Retrieved September 25, 2018 from Mintel Reports database.

Implications:

The demographics of the tri-county area match with the demographics most likely to participate in active outdoor activities. Therefore, with the right marketing implementation, this can be an effective campaign to reach the target market in the tri-county area.

Key Finding #2:

87% of surveyed adults report participating in a leisure outdoor activity, while 52% participated in an active outdoor activity.

Source: Mintel. (2017). *Outdoor Enthusiasts - US - March 2017*. Retrieved September 25, 2018 from Mintel Reports database.

Implications:

Interest for outdoor leisure activities is high among adults, it is a matter of generating awareness among citizens. This is the very goal of the Boone Forks marketing campaign, and by further breaking down different activities into active and leisure, the marketing campaign will be able to effectively target different types of consumer preferences.

Key Finding #3:

Activities that can be done without too much exertion, close to the home, and with little risk are appealing to a majority of adults.

Source: Mintel. (2017). *Outdoor Enthusiasts - US - March 2017*. Retrieved September 25, 2018 from Mintel Reports database.

Implications:

Adults are looking for convenience when it comes to outdoor leisure activities. With a plethora of parks and activities in the area, we believe highlighting the close proximity of the parks will appeal to consumers who don't want to dedicate a lot of time and resources to participating in an outdoor activity.

Key Finding #4: Consumer Profiles

The Boone Forks team broke down residents in the tri-county area into three groups who are interested in different activities:

Adventurers - Adventurers can be broken down into residents who seek unique, high exertion activities such as the OHV Park.

Reflection Seekers - Residents who are seeking to spend time outside but not fully exerting themselves. Reflection seekers may participate in activities such as bird watching, hiking, or camping.

Family Connectors - Family connectors are the people who want to spend time outside with family and friends. They may be more likely to camp, take their kids swimming, or rent a cabin.

Activity Breakdown in the Boone Forks Area

The Marketing Institute Team identified the following activity types that the marketing campaign should be targeted to based on activity type, who it appeals to, and what specific activities are available:

Activity Type	Appeals to:	Activities
Active	Adventurers	Horseback riding, OHV Park, Frisbee Golf, Hunting, Golfing, Paddle Boarding
Leisure	Reflection Seekers	Hiking, Biking, Fishing, Camping, Tiny Home Rentals, Swimming, Canoe Rentals, Paddle Boats, Pontoon Rentals, Shooting Ranges
Winter	Adventurers/Reflection Seekers	Ice Fishing, Cabin Rentals, Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowshoeing, Sledding, Snowmobiling

SWOT Analysis

The Marketing Institute Team has identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the Boone Forks marketing initiative.

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plethora of activities available - The tri-county region has many parks and activities already available to the public. It is a matter of building off of this strength and promoting the area to the residents. ● Existing infrastructure of parks, activities, and trails - The infrastructure at the parks is already in place. ● Communication between tri-county leaders - Each county's conservation director appear to share the same vision and mission for the Boone Forks marketing campaign. 	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of cohesive message/branding - There is currently not a cohesive marketing campaign in place to promote the parks and activities in the tri-county area. ● The shortage of staff in each county office - With limited resources and the overworked staff in each county, it makes implementing a new marketing campaign an overwhelming effort. ● Uncertainty of ownership of this project - There is currently a committee in charge of this project. However, there is no individual who can dedicate 100% of their time to the marketing campaign.
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate sponsorships - Utilizing the cabins to offer corporate retreats may draw in more interest to the area. ● Environmental awareness and conservation programs - offering classes on protecting the parks system may bring an increase of support in the area. ● Educational programs - Offering classes for beginners for new activities may also bring an increase of support in the area. ● Health benefits - Capitalizing on the multitude of health benefits to spending time outside may result in an increase in awareness and participation. ● Economic development - Utilizing the marketing campaign to promote businesses in the area will benefit both the town and the Boone Forks region. 	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding - County funding is not always dependable to allocate the appropriate resources to the parks system ● Political uncertainty - Change in the political landscape may hinder efforts for this campaign. ● Competitors - The Des Moines area has different attractions that may draw people over the parks in the area. ● Aversion to outdoor activities - In the Netflix age, it may be tough to convince residents to leave the comfort of their home.

Phase #2: Primary Research

Overview:

The following key findings, implications, and recommendations are based off of the survey data that was collected in February of this year.

Key Finding #1:

According to our survey data, 79% of residents are not aware of the opportunities for outdoor activities within the 3 counties (311 responses). If aware, 80% would be very likely to visit within the 3 counties

Implication:

Residents are unaware of the activities in their area, leading to a lack of participation from the residents.

Recommendation:

Boone Forks should utilize appropriate channels catered towards the customers to generate awareness about the activities in the tri-county area. The marketing materials included with this project are aimed at helping Boone Forks implement this marketing campaign in an affordable way. Through the use of a website, social media, and printed marketing materials, awareness for the Boone Forks initiative will grow and lead to an increase in overall awareness.

Key Finding #2:

Respondents are 70% more likely to participate in learning a new activity if they get hands on instructions on how to do it. (314 responses)

Implication:

Respondents are intimidated by activities of which they are inexperienced.

Recommendation:

Boone Forks should offer beginner level courses in recreational activities as well as structured itineraries for user convenience. Beginner level courses will be an effective way to bring individuals who haven't participated in activities out for the first time. By building an experienced network of volunteers who would be willing to spend free time teaching classes, Boone Forks will be able to implement these courses for no charge.

Key Finding #3:

The most significant deterring factor in participation is a lack of time.

Implication:

Respondents do not feel they have the appropriate time to travel and participate in activities in the tri-county area.

Recommendation:

Emphasize the close proximity of activities from their home county. Marketing materials should depict activities that are less time consuming or can be done on the weekends. Developing time estimates for each activity and further developing the pre-made itineraries will be an effective way for residents to understand that these activities will not take a large amount of time if they don't prefer.

Key Finding #4:

According to the survey results, 304 of the respondents indicated that they spent their free time with family and friends.

Implication:

Regardless of the deterrents that are preventing respondents from utilizing the parks in the Boone Forks region, respondents indicated that they preferred to spend whatever little free time they have with family and friends.

Recommendation:

Therefore, the marketing materials that this campaign utilizes should emphasize activities that can be done with friends and family. In addition, it would be beneficial to offer group packages for various activities to further encourage patrons to participate in activities with others.

Key Finding #5:

90% of the survey respondents indicated they would utilize a centralized website containing information related to all of the parks in the tri-county region.

Implication:

Residents are looking for an easier way to access all of the information about the Boone Forks area.

Recommendation:

The Boone Forks website should be an entirely comprehensive resource for users to find everything regarding activities in the area. The website should be supplemented with additional marketing materials such as brochures for residents to take home and a Facebook page where administration can easily organize events and communicate announcements.

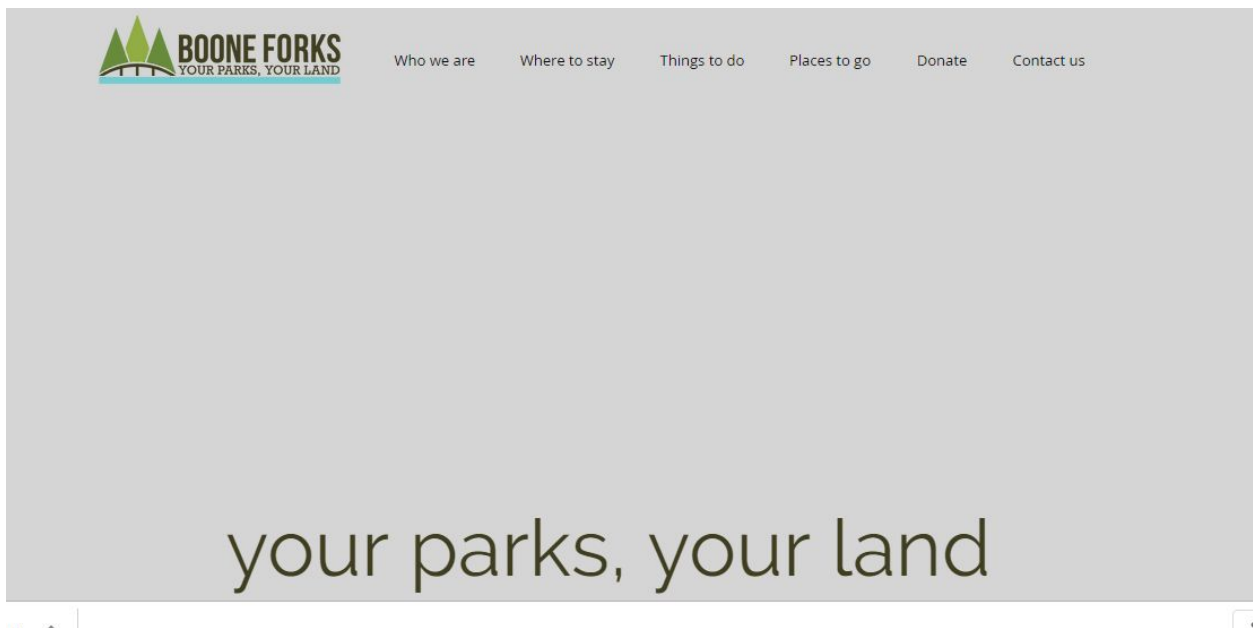
Deliverables

Overview

The Marketing Institute Team, along with a freelance graphic designer, worked to create the following in-scope deliverables for this project:

- Boone Forks Website
- Social Media Marketing
- Printed Marketing Materials
- Logo and Tagline

The deliverables are designed to contain information about the Boone Forks region in a centralized location through the website and supporting marketing materials.



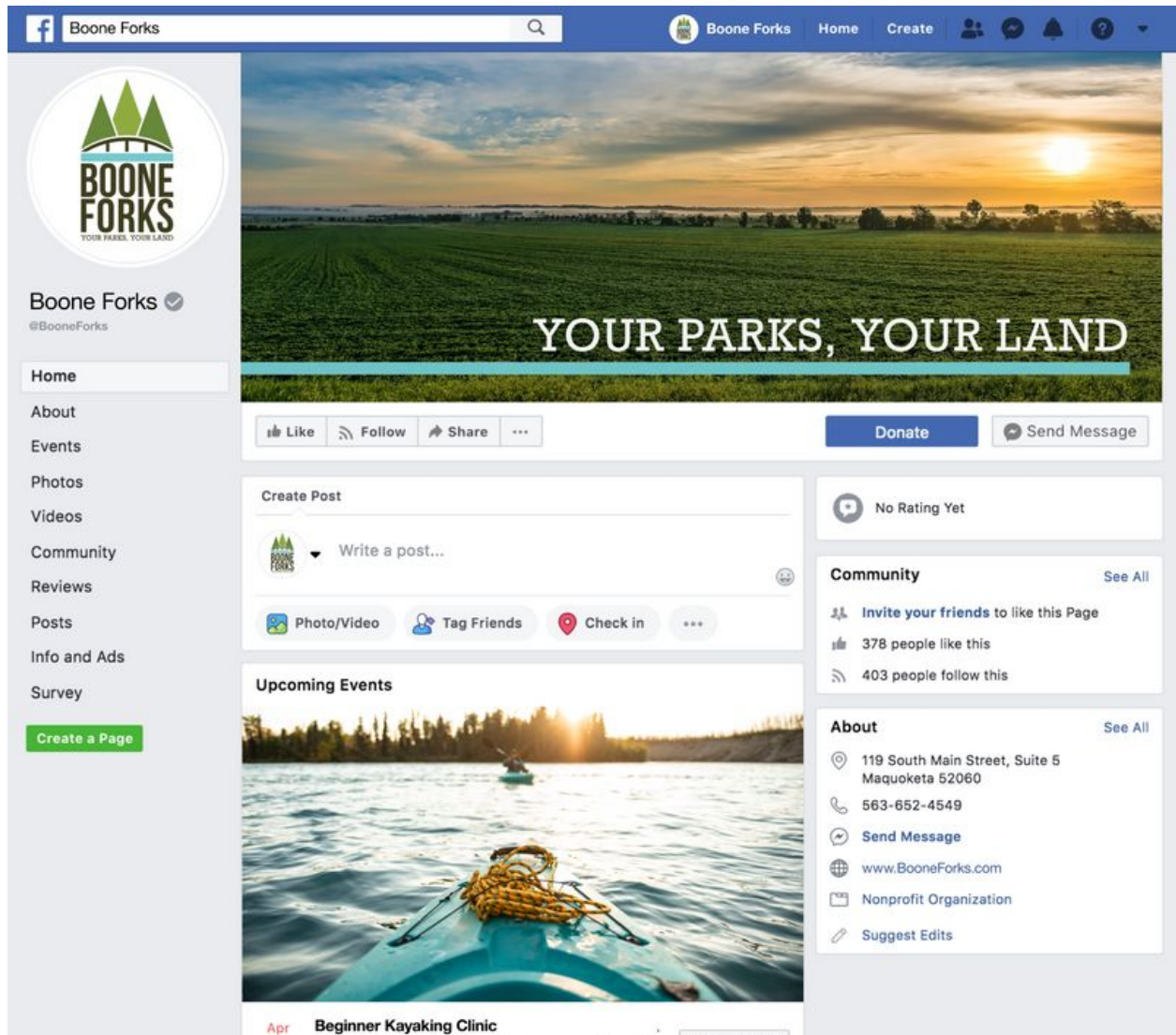
Official Boone Forks Website

Boone Forks Website Login

- *Username:* Booneforksparks@gmail.com
- *Password:* booneforks1!



Official Boone Forks Logo



Boone Forks Facebook Mockup

RESERVING A FACILITY

How do I set-up an account? Go to mycountyparks.com

- 1) Click on the **Login** icon link at the top right corner of the home page, at the Login page, click the **Create Account** box in the lower right corner of page, the Account Registration page will open;

OR

Click on the **Make Reservation** tab at the top of the home page, a drop down box will open, click on **Register Now** in the bottom right corner of the drop down box, the Account Registration page will open; either step may be used to access the Account Registration page.

- 2) Enter a username (no restrictions).
- 3) Enter a password
Password must be between 4-8 characters and contain at least one uppercase alpha letter, one lowercase alpha letter, one number and no special characters - \$,%,#, etc.
- 4) Enter the personal information required
*Required information has a red * asterisk next to it.*
- 5) Enter billing information.
- 6) Select the county in which you are interested.
- 7) Check/uncheck the box to receive e-updates.
- 8) Click create account.



DID YOU KNOW?

Webster County is home to Iowa's largest OHV park consisting of 60 miles of trails!
(Webster, 2018)

Only 50% of adults get their recommended activity per day! How do you like to move?
(CDC, 2018)

There are 120 miles of water trail located in the region!
(Boone, 2018)

Briggs Woods park in Hamilton County was the first county park in the state of Iowa.



booneforks.com

booneforks.com

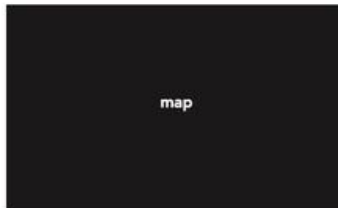
Boone Forks Brochure Side 2



ACTIVITIES

- Camping
- Hunting
- Golfing
- Cross Country Skiing
- Canoe Rental
- Climate controlled cabins rental
(with wifi and big screen tv)
- Horseback riding
- Fishing/Ice Fishing
- Pontoon Rental
- Paddle Boarding
- Shooting Ranges
- Swimming
- Snowmobiling
- Environmental Education Programs
- Art classes
- OHV Trails
- Historic Sites
- Paddling classes
- Mountain Biking
- River Floats
- Bird/wildlife watching

MAPS



PARKS & ATTRACTIONS

Boone County

- Beaver Creek Wildlife Area
- Grant's Woods
- High Trestle Trail

Hamilton County

- Albright's Canoe Access
- Briggs Woods Park and Golf Course
- Little Wall Lake Park

Webster County

- Camp Wa-No-Ki
- Gypsum City OHV Park
- Skillet Creek Indian Mounds

For a full list of parks and attractions, visit our website at booneforks.com

Boone Forks Brochure side 2

Implementation Timeline:

The Marketing Institute Team identified the following timeline for implementation:

60 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hire marketing/social media coordinator● Roll out website + Facebook● Utilize pamphlets in each location
90 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Organize volunteers to teach beginner level courses● Create and send monthly calendar via email, keep hard copy in county conservation offices● Begin tracking metrics
180 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Roll out beginner level courses● Resend survey to see follow-up numbers● Implement follow-up surveys for cabin rentals
1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Continue tracking metrics● Continue updating Facebook, website, newsletters● Consider branching out to other social media platforms

Final Recommendations

1. **Branding Guide with Logo and Tagline** - Utilizing the branding guide to make any future edits to the Boone Forks name and tagline will prevent the need to hire an outside marketing team. The branding guide can be found in the appendix of the executive summary.
2. **Comprehensive Website** - Continuing to build on the Boone Forks website by including itinerary items, class offerings, and information on the effort will increase the overall awareness and help to bring more people out of their homes and into the parks.
3. **Boone Forks Pamphlet** - Supplementing the website with a paper brochure will help the marketing campaign to reach demographics who may not be interested in using a website or Facebook to get information about the region.
4. **Facebook Page** - Keeping the Boone Forks Facebook page updated and designating a coordinator or intern to be in charge of the page will help the public stay informed about things happening in the area.
5. **Hiring a Regional Coordinator/Intern to Assist with Project** - Hiring a coordinator or intern will help progress work on implementing the marketing campaign. An intern will help to save funds while being able to offer real-world course work.

6. **Track Metrics and Collect Data Through Various Measurements (Rentals, Follow-up Surveys) -** Tracking success through follow-up surveys, rental numbers, and other data will allow the Boone Forks team to track success after the marketing campaign has been implemented.
7. **Incorporate Educational Programs with Local Volunteers -** Build a network of volunteers who would be willing to allocate free time to teaching beginner level courses. This ensures that there are very minimal costs to setting up the courses and can keep them free to the public who may be interested in trying out a new activity but not willing to spend the money.

Appendixes – (Attached)

- Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey Results
- Appendix B: Branding Guide
- Appendix C: Boone Forks Final Presentation