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which includes managing the 400 or so acres of city park land, said the city has a few options.

One would be to place the land under state protection that would allow the state to designate it "in the same way as a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area" and administer it by the DNR under a cooperative agreement between the city and state.

That process could take up to a year, but would make it difficult for a future city council to change the park.

"That would be my preference," said Mayor Vagnozzi, adding that voters had approved a parks and recreation millage in 1991 with the provision that active and passive recreation parks be included in city plans.

Another way to change the park's status would be to amend the city's code, which can be done by the city council. Trouble is, it can be just as easily undone by a future council.

City Attorney John Donohue is researching another option, a charter amendment.

"That would take a vote of the people," Potter said. "But it would take a vote of the people to change it again."

Vagnozzi said he would not mind voters having a say, but said they already have by endorsing the parks and recreation millage.

"I consider the charter much like the Constitution," he said.

Another way to preserve the park is to go with a conservancy ensemble. There are several in the state and region already.

A conservancy oversees the land and preserves it as natural park land. The city maintains ownership and control and can get out of a conservancy agreement as well.

None of the options are costly. The state option or conservancy would be handled administratively. The city council amendment would be a simple vote of the council and a charter amendment could be voted on during a regularly scheduled election.

Since none of the options are written in stone, and can be changed, at least one city

councilman has doubts about the wisdom of any of the options.

"I think the presumption that we're going to change the park is 100 percent false," said Councilman Jerry Ellis who is also a 10-year member and former chairman of the parks and recreation commission.

"When I heard that none of these options could guarantee that this would be permanent, I had to laugh," he said. "I have an open mind. If someone has a suggestion that will help, I'm interested. But if these are the options, I think we're wasting our time."

Ellis said handcuffing a future city council was also "presumptuous."

Regardless of what, if any option the city tries, a recommendation by the DNR to establish a management plan for the park is important.

"In time, trees die and you have to take into account the changes in the parks," Potter said. "We have to have a plan in order to come under state statute. And we need one regardless."

Scores from page A1

the construction of the test were different. Students weren't used to the new procedures, and neither were teachers... (but) we're very optimistic about the results. This was the first year. I see the test scores improving."

Deborah Brauer, publications specialist for Farmington, said that while it's tempting to rank schools by HSPT results, the numbers are often too close to call.

"If you look at the mean scores, there's not much difference between districts," she said, pointing out that in the reading proficiency category, the margin between fourth-ranked Farmington and 26th-ranked Clawson was only 2.6 points.

"You really try to concentrate on the kids doing well," she continued. "We're trying not to look at the results as rankings, and from the feedback we've gotten from other districts, they're not, either."

Superintendent of Schools Robert Maxfield acknowledged the increased difficulty of the HSPT, but said that higher standards are necessary to excel.

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Deborah Brauer
School spokesperson

becoming America's premier 21st century school system," he said. "We have high expectations. When the students achieve, then they can do more."

Results were also released last week for the MEAP test, an "essential skills" test taken by fifth and eighth graders in March.

Scores showed that 43.7 percent of Farmington fifth graders were proficient at science and 84.9 percent at writing. Eighth graders were 27.8 percent proficient at science and 80.7 percent at writing.

These scores were also above county averages.

Hills plans open house for Woodland Hills Nature Park

An open house is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 5, between 9-11:30 a.m. in the Woodland Hills Nature Park in Farmington Hills. The park, which opened in 1995, features walking trails, bridges, rivers and ponds. The woods and meadows are home to

many birds and animals and to many species of flora and fauna.

Staff members from the Department of Special Services will conduct guided tours through the park at 9:30 a.m. and at 10:30 a.m. Self-guided tours may begin anytime. Light

refreshments will be available all morning.

The park is located on Farmington Road, south of I-696. The entrance is across from the Oakland Community College entrance. Parking will be available at nearby Oakland Commu-

nity College or at the adjacent Forest Park Baptist Church.

For more information contact the city of Farmington Hills, Department of Special Services at 473-9583.

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A program of liturgy, ethnic food, art and classical music will comprise the "Polish Day" agenda Sunday, Oct. 6, at the Orchard Lake Schools.

Mass in the Polish language at 1 p.m. will be celebrated in the shrine chapel on the schools' campus in northwest suburban Detroit.

Polish American-style dinners will be available starting at 2 p.m.

The campus Galeria, starting at noon, will host the annual Richard Kubinski Art Competition for both young and adult artists of Polish American background.

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