



The Monmouth County Park System

Recreation Services Plan

Prepared by the Monmouth County Park System

Adopted by the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners
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OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

The Monmouth County Park System is Monmouth County's open space, parks and recreation agency. Allocation of resources to recreation services is an investment in quality of life for the citizens of Monmouth County. The Park System must meet the challenge of expanding and stretching its financial and organizational capacity to satisfy the needs of the population it serves.

The Recreation Services Plan is a road map for the strategic management of resources, setting forth clear, fact-based and locally appropriate goals. Its two principle purposes are to establish internal direction and priorities and to maintain conformance with the standards of the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies.

The Park System's professional staff developed the Plan in a process that included participation of management and non-management representatives of the Visitor Services Department and the Operations & Maintenance Department. For the Plan, the elements defined as recreation services include recreation programs, activities and events; the facilities and places at which they are held; and the provision of facilities and equipment for independent, self-directed recreation.

The Plan establishes three fundamental goals for recreation services:

1. Provide a range of quality regional recreational services, programs and places that enhance and enrich the overall lives and wellness of the people who live and work in Monmouth County.
2. Promote leisure activities and an appreciation of open space and the natural, historic and cultural resources that both support resource-based activities and contribute to the quality of life of the people who live and work in Monmouth County.
3. Furnish these recreational opportunities in the most effective, efficient and economical manner possible and, where appropriate, generate revenue to support the overall recreation services provided by the Park System.

The Plan identifies 13 objectives to guide the design and implementation of recreation services towards the achievement of these three goals. It also describes the role of the Monmouth County Park System as a recreation services provider in a series of seven statements.

The Plan includes a review of existing conditions that impact the Park System's ability to fulfill its role as a recreation provider. These conditions include demographics, recreation trends, community interests, community opportunities, program staffing and organization, program offerings, recreation facilities, and budget.

Based on an assessment of these conditions, the Action Plan section of the Recreation Services Plan outlines 13 actions intended to improve the efficiency of the Park System's performance to meet the Plan goals for recreation services. Actions will be initiated over the Plan's five-year horizon in accordance with current-year implementation plans to be developed.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Recreation services make a difference in communities. Allocation of resources to recreation services is an investment in quality of life. The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders have long understood and appreciated the value of parks and recreation to the citizens of Monmouth County. The Monmouth County Park System proudly serves as Monmouth County's open space, parks and recreation agency. The operation and administration of the Park System is overseen by the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners whose mission statement is as follows:

The Board of Recreation Commissioners is committed to improving the quality of life of the citizens of Monmouth County by providing park and recreation areas, facilities, programs, and services of the highest quality and to furnishing these recreational opportunities in the most effective, efficient, and economical manner possible.

The Board shall pursue this mission

- *by studying, planning, acquiring, improving, and managing lands of county significance for parks, recreation, conservation, and open space preservation;*
- *by protecting and interpreting natural, historic, and cultural resources of county significance;*
- *by providing recreational facilities, programs, and services to meet the county-wide needs of the citizens of Monmouth County for the recreation and well-being of body, mind, and spirit; and*
- *by implementing this mission in accordance with the Board's adopted County Park and Recreation Policy and other adopted policies.*

To fulfill its responsibilities to the citizens of Monmouth County, the Park System must adapt to changes in the community it serves. The county population is growing, aging and becoming more diverse and technologically savvy. Its expectations for the supply and quality of public recreation services are increasing as current economic realities strain its tolerance for higher property taxes and user fees. In this climate, the Park System must meet the challenge of expanding and stretching its financial and organizational capacity to satisfy the needs of the population it serves. The Recreation Services Plan will serve as a road map for the strategic management of resources, setting forth clear, fact-based and locally appropriate goals and establishing a process for monitoring that future decisions and actions conform to the Plan.

Purpose

It is within this context that the Board of Recreation Commissioners and Park System professional staff have undertaken the task of preparing this Recreation Services Plan. For the Plan, the elements defined as recreation services include:

- recreation programs, activities and events;
- the facilities and places at which they are held; and
- the provision of facilities and equipment for independent, self-directed recreation.

The Plan has two principal purposes:

1. Establish internal direction and priorities.

The formal planning process provides a thoughtful opportunity to evaluate existing conditions and review changes, internal and external, to the Park System that may potentially impact the delivery of quality recreation services. This enables informed decisions to be made regarding the future vision of the Park System as a recreation services provider. The resulting Plan provides a framework for the construction and delivery of recreation services intended to produce certain recreation benefits. It serves as a work plan for staff throughout the Park System to revise, refine and enhance Park System recreation services to program participants, park users, and the general public. It will also serve as a reference document in the preparation of annual marketing plans, park master plans, park management plans, and operating and capital budget recommendations.

2. Maintain conformance with the standards of the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies.

One of the ten categories of standards used by the Commission in evaluating agencies for accreditation is Programs and Services Management. The standard for a Recreation Programming Plan states, *“The agency shall utilize a recreation programming plan that includes both a long-range plan covering 3 to 5 years or more that is periodically reviewed and a current-year implementation plan.”*

The Plan will have a five-year horizon; a formal review to determine if an amendment to the plan or preparation of a new plan is warranted will occur within five years from the date of Plan adoption.

Relationship to Other Plans

The Recreation Services Plan directly relates to elements of other County planning documents. The Recreation Services Plan is consistent with these documents.

The Monmouth County Master Plan, adopted by the Monmouth County Planning Board in 2016, is the master plan for Monmouth County. The Recreation Services Plan directly supports the following policies as stated in the Monmouth County Master Plan:

- Encourage county and municipal actions to identify, promote and protect natural resources and significant natural features, unique areas, critical habitats, and the potential or known habitats of resident and migratory populations of rare, endangered and threatened species, particularly those that have municipal, county or statewide significance.
- Protect, conserve and enhance the County’s significant, diverse, natural and scenic resources utilizing sound ecological protection and restoration measures.
- Protect habitat and ecological diversity by encouraging the preservation of large, contiguous tracts of land.
- Encourage the sustainable use of public lands in concert with natural resource protection.
- Encourage the protection and conservation of all water sources, including the reuse of water, through responsible water resource management planning.
- Promote public awareness of environmental issues through outreach and educational opportunities including the relationship between the protection and enhancement of natural resources and economic value to the community.
- Encourage and support local efforts to identify, preserve and restore significant historic sites, buildings, structures, and cultural institutions.
- Reinforce Monmouth County’s rich arts, cultural and historic identity by promoting venues, sites and events that invite visitors, attract business, and entice residents to discover our vibrant, diverse and distinct communities.
- Support education programs that incorporate Monmouth County history and expand opportunities for culturally-oriented programming.
- Encourage the development of a multi-modal transportation and circulation network that promotes walkability and bicycling, links neighborhoods to one another, and connects residents to employment centers and regional facilities.
- Enhance and improve recreational opportunities.
- Support the acquisition of natural open lands that protect environmentally sensitive resources, provide for habitat restoration, and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards.
- Promote sustainable coastal, rural, cultural and historical-based tourism.
- Support investment in the preservation of cultural, historic and scenic resources located in priority growth areas and locations.

The Monmouth County Open Space Plan (2006) was adopted by both the Board of Recreation Commissioners and the County Planning Board. Action agenda items contained in the Open Space Plan, which are reinforced by the Recreation Services Plan, include the following:

- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle linkages between different open space areas and between open space areas, residential areas, schools and other centers of activity. (Advocacy 7.)
- Promote public awareness and appreciation of the open space resources and park facilities available to them. (Stewardship 2.)
- The County parklands and facilities should be diverse so as to appeal to a broad range of possible users. (Stewardship 3.)
- Support municipal efforts to acquire and improve park and open space lands to meet local needs through a County-funded grant program and special assistance to State-designated Urban Aid communities. (Stewardship 4.)

The Monmouth County Park System Park Development and Maintenance Plan was adopted by the Board of Recreation Commissioners in 2011. Implementation strategies contained in the Park Development and Maintenance Plan, which are reinforced by and support objectives of the Recreation Services Plan, include the following:

- The Park System should continue efforts to educate the public regarding open space resources.
- The Park System should continue to design, inspect and maintain its facilities to ensure visitor safety.
- The Park System should increase outdoor recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- The Park System should continue to require that all newly constructed buildings and facilities and alterations to existing buildings and facilities be free of architectural barriers that restrict access or use by persons with disabilities.
- The Park System should provide basic day use accommodations at each of the Regional Parks.
- The Park System should expand the regional recreation opportunities in areas of high population and for activities which are in high demand.
- The Park System should have accommodations for regional multi-purpose indoor programming and outdoor recreation distributed throughout the county.
- The Park System should expand its use of facilities for resource education and interpretation.
- The Park System should continue to periodically survey public opinion regarding needed regional facilities and facility improvements.
- The Park System should seek opportunities to expand revenue at each facility.
- The Park System should continue to explore other facilities and improvements which fulfill the agency's mission while generating revenue to support the System.

PHILOSOPHY/MISSION

Goals

Consistent with the mission statement of the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners, the fundamental goals of the Recreation Services Plan can be stated as follows:

1. Provide a range of quality regional recreational services, programs and places that enhance and enrich the overall lives and wellness of the people who live and work in Monmouth County.
2. Promote leisure activities and an appreciation of open space and the natural, historic and cultural resources that both support resource-based activities and contribute to the quality of life of the people who live and work in Monmouth County.
3. Furnish these recreational opportunities in the most effective, efficient and economical manner possible and, where appropriate, generate revenue to support the overall recreation services provided by the Park System.

Objectives

All recreation services should be designed and implemented to advance the mission of the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners and the goals of the Recreation Services Plan. The objectives for meeting the Recreation Services Plan goals are described below:

1. *Provide quality year-round opportunities for individuals, families, and groups of all ages, interests, abilities, and skills from throughout Monmouth County to engage in a variety of recreation activities.*
Participation in recreational activities, although purely voluntary, has many individual, community, environmental and economic benefits. Directed and self-directed participation should be actively encouraged and supported by providing a broad range of interesting, fun and accessible opportunities and by treating customers as special people.
2. *Preserve and provide opportunities for recreation activities which are dependent on scarce and/or special land, natural, historic, or cultural resources.*
The Park System manages more than 17,000 acres of public land including diverse field, wetland and woodland habitat and special resources such as lakes, ponds, ocean and bay front property, and historic sites. This acreage and its resources can support recreation activities that might otherwise not be possible in Monmouth County.
3. *Embrace a resource conservation ethic within the Park System and encourage the same ethic among Monmouth County residents and visitors.*
Responsible land management and use of air, water, fuel, soil and other natural resources should be an integral part of Monmouth County Park System culture. The importance of conservation to a healthy, sustainable community and the value of natural and historic resources within the Monmouth County Park System should be communicated by the agency and its individual staff members to others both by example and in our interaction with the public, including the incorporation of conservation principles in program curricula, print publications, exhibits, the internet and other media.
4. *Promote and support a positive County image through quality park sites and memorable recreation experiences. County park sites contribute to the County's identity and perceptions of quality of life.*
Programs and activities offered at the sites provide valuable opportunities for socialization and interaction. Volunteer, service learning, teacher training, and other stewardship opportunities build pride in the parks and the communities they serve.
5. *Inform the public about the availability of Park System recreation services and opportunities.*
For the public to take full advantage of the recreation opportunities available, the Park System must increase their awareness of the parks, programs, services and the Park System brand.

6. *Generate sufficient revenue to support the availability of a full range of quality facilities, programs and services including a variety of free programs and special events open to the general public and subsidized programs for the disadvantaged.*

The Park System is dependent on revenue to support its recreation services. The charging of fees is the means to meet demand, permitting the Park System to be responsive to customer interests in offering a volume and diversity of facilities, programs and services much greater than the basic set of services that could be supported by a purely tax-financed system.

7. *Promote and support the development and maintenance of lifetime recreation skills and prepare individuals for independent, self-directed participation in the recreational activities of their choice.*

Participation in recreational activities begins with an initial introduction to the activity. Making that introduction, teaching skills, and providing places for recreational activity are essential to lifetime recreational activity.

8. *Promote and support healthy lifestyles and wellness of body, mind and soul through creative and re-creative pursuits.*

County park sites provide safe and attractive places for physical activity as well as for relaxation and renewal. Recreation programs help to exercise the body and mind through enjoyable activities.

9. *Provide opportunities for persons with physical and cognitive disabilities to participate in a variety of recreation activities that offer therapeutic benefits.*

Awareness of the benefits of recreational activity to persons with disabilities and long-term illnesses is growing, as is the emphasis on abilities rather than limitations. Delivery of services to this population often requires specialized facilities and supervision by trained staff that are outside the reach of many municipal providers.

10. *Make reasonable accommodations to ensure that financial, transportation or physical barriers do not preclude County residents from opportunities to participate in Park System programs and use its facilities.*

The average Monmouth County resident is affluent, has access to a car, and has no physical disabilities. Because not every resident is average, the menu of programs and services offered needs to include and accommodate persons who are financially disadvantaged, cannot travel to remote park locations, or have special physical or cognitive needs.

11. *Work with others to expand and promote the opportunities for recreational activities available to Monmouth County residents and visitors.*

Cooperation and partnerships between the Park System and other recreation providers, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses as well as sponsorships can contribute to achieving the Plan goals and directly benefits the public served by the Park System. The design of programs to satisfy school curriculum requirements is an example of mutually beneficial interagency cooperation.

12. *Retain qualified individuals to deliver Park System recreation services to the public and support the professional growth of Park System employees through training and participation in professional organizations and continuing education opportunities.*

Customers of the Monmouth County Park System rightfully expect a quality park and recreation experience. The professionalism of Park System staff, volunteers and contractors is critical to the delivery of safe, enjoyable programs and adds value to the recreation services offered.

13. *Assess service delivery and continually make refinements to achieve high quality, efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and consumer satisfaction.*

Continual systematic assessment of service delivery is critical in evaluating if the intended program objectives are being met, if customers are satisfied, what opportunities exist for new and expanded programming, and how the choice and delivery of services can be improved. Because trends, the economy, the market, the population, customer expectations, staff, rules and standards, and school curricula all change, recreation services must change as well.

Role

The universe of recreation service providers in Monmouth County includes the Federal, State and municipal governments, public and private schools, non-profit agencies and groups, and private entities. The Park System, a taxpayer-supported County agency, needs to define its role so as to maximize the overall benefit to County residents and visitors, complementing and supporting the other providers wherever possible.

Generally speaking, the roles of other recreation service providers can be described as follows:

- Federal and State park areas preserve significant natural, cultural, and historic resources and support resource-dependent recreation by visitors from across the region and the country.
- Municipal recreation departments and boards in Monmouth County, with the exception of a handful of larger departments, tend to focus on close-to-home facilities, sports leagues, community event-based recreation activities, and programs and activities designed for children and senior citizens.
- Public and private schools provide recreation facilities and programs as part of their curriculum and as extracurricular activities for their students.
- Non-profit agencies and groups in Monmouth County have established a variety of roles including organizing recreation leagues, sponsoring special interest and community event-based recreation activities, and managing multi-purpose indoor recreation facilities.
- Private entities provide recreation services in response to market demands, supplying those facilities and programs that are currently popular and economically viable.

The delivery of recreation services by the Monmouth County Park System is driven by the agency mission and the goals and objectives of the Recreation Services Plan, but must always consider net revenue potential, user interests, and market characteristics. The role of the Monmouth County Park System as a recreation services provider can be described by the following series of statements:

1. Park System programming is either instruction and skill-based, encourages an understanding and responsible stewardship of the natural and historic/cultural environment, promotes park use and a connection to the outdoors, fosters personal socialization, health and well-being, and/or supports lifetime recreation skills. Child care, senior centers, and other activities devoid of these qualities are outside the role of the Park System.
2. The Park System is committed to serving all segments of the regional population by offering a broad range of recreation service and program options (content, locations, skill levels, types of participation, directed and self-directed) and more specialized programming that cannot be supported by a smaller, local population base.
3. Park System recreation services take advantage of the special park settings and the land and historic, cultural and natural resources it manages.
4. The Park System is dependent on revenue to support the volume and diversity of recreation services it offers.
5. Park System programming is designed and supervised by qualified staff with a low student to instructor ratio.
6. Park System recreation services are designed, advertised, and located with the intent of serving persons from multiple municipalities with no exclusive use agreements and to fill unmet needs.
7. The Park System acts as an advocate for the parks and recreation profession and a facilitator for improvements in the parks and recreation field.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Park System functions within the context of a larger societal, political, physical, economic and technological environment. Issues and conditions, both external and internal, to the Park System impact decisions regarding the recreation services to be offered over the next five years. The following review of demographics, recreation trends, community interests, community opportunities, program staffing and organization, program offerings, recreation facilities, and budget is intended to enlighten that decision making.

Demographics

One of the goals of the Recreation Services Plan is to provide a range of quality regional recreational services, programs and places that enhance and enrich the lives of the people who live and work in Monmouth County. To meet that goal, we must know something about these people. The source for the demographic data is based on information from the 2016 Monmouth County Profile, Monmouth County Division of Planning.

Population Growth

Prior to World War II, Monmouth County was predominately rural with over 50% of its land area devoted to farming. After the war ended the population surged, and by 1950 the County had added over 64,000 residents to the 1940 total. The 1954 opening of the Garden State Parkway brought expanded residential and economic development opportunities along with improved access to regional employment centers.

The post-war baby boom, suburban migration, and the in-migration of major employers drove population growth for the next two decades, adding over 236,000 residents by 1970, more than doubling the County's population. Almost 50% of Monmouth County's population growth during the post-war suburbanization period (1945-1974) occurred within municipalities adjacent to the Garden State Parkway (Economic Profile of Monmouth County, 1980). In subsequent decades, the County's population growth slowed to a more sustainable rate, averaging 51,000 per decade, reaching 615,301 by the year 2000.

During the 1980s, the widening of Route 9 spurred both residential and economic growth in the western part of the County. Between 1990 and 2000, 51.2% of the County's total population growth occurred within four Western Monmouth municipalities: Howell (16%), Marlboro (14%), Freehold Township (11%) and Manalapan (11%). While capturing a majority of the County's population growth, these four municipalities make up only 33% of total land area within the county. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 49% of Monmouth County's population growth between 1990 and 2000 was linked to net natural increase (excess births minus deaths), 34% to in-migration from other parts of the United States, and 19% from international immigration.

The 2010 U.S. Census reported Monmouth County's population to be 630,380, a 2.5% increase from 2000, the lowest observed population growth increase since The Great Depression. The 2010 Census count ranked Monmouth County as the 5th most populous in New Jersey, encompassing 7.2% of the state's population.

Population Density

According to the 2010 Census, Monmouth County has a density of 1,337 people per square mile. In addition to the historic urban centers, municipalities with the highest population densities can be found along the coast, bayshore, and adjacent to the Garden State Parkway.

Densities range from 12,678 persons per square mile in Shrewsbury Township to a low of 145 persons per square mile in Upper Freehold. The following municipalities have the highest overall density per square mile:

- Shrewsbury Township (0.009 square miles): 12,678 persons/sq. mile
- Asbury Park (1.50 square miles): 10,744 persons/sq. mile
- Keansburg (0.95 square miles): 10,637 persons/sq. mile
- Lake Como (0.20 square miles): 8,795 persons/sq. mile
- Highlands (0.64 square miles): 7,820 persons/sq. mile

The larger suburban municipalities, Freehold Township, Marlboro, Manalapan, Howell, Holmdel, Middletown, Wall, and Tinton Falls, have densities ranging from approximately 800 to 1,600 persons/square mile. Monmouth County's large rural municipalities, located primarily in the western portion of the County, have the lowest population density per square mile.

- Upper Freehold (47.45 square miles): 145 persons/sq. mile
- Millstone (37.38 square miles): 283 persons/sq. mile
- Colts Neck (31.70 square miles): 320 persons/sq. mile

Age Composition

Between 1990 and 2010, the 45–64 year age cohort experienced the largest absolute growth in population increasing from 113,846 in 1990 to 148,474 in 2010. Growth continues within the 65+ age cohort, with the 2010 Census reporting that 13.75% of the County's population is comprised within this category. Since 1990, the 65+ cohort has increased by 16,304 residents or 23.4%. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of children within the 5-19 year age cohort increased by 21,363 or 19.4%. By 2010, the number of residents within the school age group remained relatively stable, declining by only 661.

While some age cohorts increased in population others experienced noteworthy declines. Between 1990 and 2010, the most significant age cohort decline occurred within the 20-34 year cohort, with the population decreasing from 127,410 in 1990 to 99,045 in 2010. The Under 5 population of Monmouth County peaked in 2000 with 42,231. During the following decade, the number of residents within this age cohort declined 17.7% to 34,755 in 2010. The following chart depicts trends within Monmouth County's age cohorts between 1970 and 2010.

Census data indicates a gradual aging of the Monmouth County population. Between 2000 and 2010, the median age in Monmouth County increased 3.6 years from 37.7 to 41.3. To compare, in 2010 New Jersey's reported median age was 39.0 years and the United States' was 37.2 years. Monmouth County ranks 4th in the state in the 45-60 age cohort, with 26.5% of the population classified within this "older adults" range.

Age Composition

Age	Monmouth County	Monmouth County	New Jersey	United States
Under 5	42,231	5.5%	6.1%	6.5%
5 - 19	118,111	20.7%	19.9%	20.4%
20 - 24	42,573	5.4%	6.2%	7.0%
25 - 44	186,989	24.0%	26.7%	26.6%
45 - 64	148,474	30.6%	27.6%	26.4%
Over 65	76,923	13.8%	13.5%	13.1%
Total	615,301	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Median Age	41.3		39	37.2

Source: 2010 U.S. Census
 Compiled by the Monmouth County Division of Planning

Race & Ethnicity

According to the U.S. Census, race and ethnicity are considered separate and distinct identities. These self-identification data items ask residents to choose the race or races with which they most closely identify, and to indicate whether or not they are of Hispanic or Latino origin. The 2010 Census reported that 520,716 (82.6%) residents identify as White, 46,443 (7.4%) as African-American, and 31,469 (5.0%) as Asian or Pacific Islander. Other races (e.g. American Indian, Alaskan Native, some other race, and two or more races) comprise the remaining 5.0% (31,752) of the County's population. From 1990 to 2010 the number of White residents increased by 7.7% and the number of Asian or Pacific Islanders increased 107%. Comparatively, the number of African-American residents increased by 5.0% from 1990 to 2000; however, during the following decade, the African-American population declined by 6.4%. In total, this segment of the population declined by 1.4% between 1990 and 2010.

According to the 2010 Census, 60,939 (9.7%) County residents (of any race) identify themselves as being of Hispanic origin. Between 1990 and 2010 the number of Hispanic/Latino residents in Monmouth County increased by 172%.

The 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates reports that Monmouth County's 66,047 Hispanic or Latino residents classify themselves as follows:

- 62.8% as White;
- 3.0% as African-American;
- 0.3% as American Indian or Alaskan Native;
- 0.6% as Asian or Pacific Islander;
- 5.7% as being of two or more races; and
- 27.6% as some other race.

Income

The 2014 ACS 1-Year Estimates reported the median household income in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars of Monmouth County as \$88,413, which is 23% above New Jersey’s median of \$71,919, and 65% above the United States’ median of \$53,657. Approximately 25.7% of Monmouth County households had total incomes of more than \$150,000 as compared to 19% of New Jersey households, and 10.5% of the United States. When evaluating per capita income in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars, Monmouth County, at \$44,873, was 23% higher than the state’s income of \$36,593, and 55% above the national income of \$28,889. Monmouth County residents have the fifth highest per capita income in New Jersey, while Hunterdon County has the highest per capita income county at \$50,415.

**Household Income Distribution
2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Monmouth County, New Jersey, United States**

	Monmouth County %	New Jersey %	United States %
Less than \$10,000	4.4%	5.7%	7.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.9%	3.7%	5.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	7.4%	8.1%	10.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.4%	7.6%	10.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	8.0%	10.6%	13.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	14.3%	16.0%	17.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.2%	12.3%	12.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	18.7%	17.1%	13.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10.4%	8.6%	5.2%
\$200,000 or more	15.3%	10.4%	5.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Median household income	\$88,413	\$71,919	\$53,657
Mean household income	\$119,517	\$99,055	\$75,591
Per capita income	\$44,873	\$36,593	\$28,889

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Compiled by the Monmouth County Division of Planning

Educational Attainment

Monmouth County's residents have achieved a high level of educational attainment, making for a highly skilled localized labor force. The 2014 ACS1-Year Estimates reported that approximately 93.1% of adult residents over the age of 25 have earned a high school diploma or higher, as compared to the New Jersey figure of 89.1% and the national figure of 86.9%.

**Educational Attainment – Population 25 Years & Over
2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Monmouth County, New Jersey, United States**

Populations 25 years and older	Monmouth County %	New Jersey %	United States %
Associates Degree	7.2	6.4	78.2
Bachelor's Degree	26.0	23.1	18.7
Graduate or Professional Degree	16.0	14.3	11.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Compiled by the Monmouth County Division of Planning

Recreation Trends

Trends external to the Monmouth County Park System are relevant to the delivery of recreation services to its constituents. The following current trends, generated from literature review, direct experience, and professional networking, have been identified as worthy of consideration in planning for recreation services.

Information released by Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2018 Study of Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Participation reveals that the most popular sport and recreational activities include fitness activities and sports such as running/jogging, high intensity/impact training, row machines, and swimming. Winter sports had an increase of 2% in participation over last year. Most of these activities appeal to both young and old alike and are enjoyed regardless of level of skill. These popular activities also have appeal because of the social aspect. For example, although fitness activities are mainly self-directed, people enjoy running and participating in fitness activities with other individuals because it can offer a degree of camaraderie.

The interest in activities has started moving toward outdoor recreation. The top activities for all age groups were outdoors, ranging from camping to biking to bird watching.

Summary of National Participatory Trend Analysis

- There are more casual participants than core participants compared to five years ago.
- Fitness and sports continue to have the highest participation rates.
- Participants went on a total of 10.9 billion outdoor outings in 2017.
- Adults who were introduced to the outdoors as children were more likely to participate in outdoor activities during adulthood than those who were not exposed to the outdoors as children.
- During the calendar year, outdoor activities attracted 13.6 million participants who tried outdoor activities for the first time or returned after a hiatus.
- Outdoor participation among Hispanics has increased by an average 1.0% over the past five years and among Asians by 0.9%.
- There has been a big increase in the number of program offerings for families, with children of all ages. This responsiveness to the Gen-X parents of today is an important step, because Gen-Xers and Gen-Y place a high value on family.
- 65% of Gen-Zer's were at least casually active in 2017.
- Almost half of Millennials participated in high caloric activities, while a quarter remained sedentary.
- While 35% of both Gen-X and Millennials were active to a healthy level, Gen-X was less active overall.
- As the Boomers continue to age, their commitment to an active lifestyle remains.
- Young kids, ages 6 to 17, who tend to be more active overall, focus on team sports and outdoor activities.
- Birdwatching is up in participation by 6.1%.
- As seen over the years, people start participating in different activities if they have a friend or family member to do it with.
- Older adults enjoy chances to socialize with others, find ways to stay healthy and active, and opportunities to serve others in their communities. They frequent fitness classes, trips, group walks, and arts and crafts classes.

National Sports Trend Analysis

- The percentage of children who play individual sports on a regular basis has declined.
- Camping, fishing and biking have found the way to the top of each age segment in 2018.
- Although the level of interest varies, swimming for fitness is another constant interest across all groups in 2018.
- Millennials are more likely than the other generations to participate in water sports, such as stand up paddling, boardsailing and surfing.
- The interest in activities has started moving toward outdoor recreation, seeing an increase in day hiking and backpacking, but lost participants in canoeing and adventure racing.

National Sports Participation Rates

- Skiing Freestyle is up 15.5%
- Pickleball is up 11.3%
- Triathlon (Non-Traditional/Off Road) is up 10.2%
- Bicycling (BMX) is up 9.9%
- Skiing (Cross-country) is up 9.0%
- Backpacking Overnight is up 8.1%
- Sledding/Saucer Riding/Snow Tubing is up 7.6%
- Trail Running is up 6.6%
- Hiking (Day) is up 6.6%
- Skiing (Alpine/Downhill) is up 6.6%
- Fishing (Saltwater) is up 6.5%
- Football (Flag) is up 6.1%
- Baseball is up 6%
- Field Hockey is up 5.6%
- Soccer (Indoor) is up 5.5%
- Kayaking (Recreational) is up 5.2%
- Fishing (Fly) is up 5.2%
- Hunting (Bow) is up 4.8%
- Basketball is up 4.7%
- Cardio Tennis is up 4.6%
- Rugby is up 4.6%
- Lacrosse is up 3.9%
- Hunting (Rifle) is up 3.6%
- Hunting (shotgun) is up 3.4%
- Stand Up Paddling is up 3.3%
- Wakeboarding is up 3.2%
- Camping (RV) is up 1.9%
- Martial Arts is up 1.6%
- Volleyball (Court) is up 1.6%
- Rafting is up 1.5%
- Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface) is up 1.3%
- Snowshoeing is up 1.3%
- Track and Field is up 1.1%
- Telemarking (Downhill) is up 0.8%
- Snowboarding is up 0.7%
- Fishing (Freshwater/Other) is up 0.6%
- Golf (course) is up 0.1%

National Fitness Trend Analysis

- The green exercise movement is on the rise. Based on research, moderate exposure to sunlight and greenery can boost your mood in five minutes and have you sweating even more than you would be in a gym.
- Baby Boomers prefer fitness activities, especially low impact such as aquatic exercise, cycling and walking.
- Running, including jogging and trail running, was the most popular activity among Americans when measured by both number of participants and number of total outings.
- With the focus on fitness and wellness among the Gen-X and Gen-Y generations, exercise and fitness classes for pregnancy, as well as stress management and healthy lifestyle, are growing in popularity.
- Aimed at children in particular, in response to the childhood obesity epidemic, life sports that are fun and an individual can participate well into their later years such as biking, kayaking, tennis, swimming, jogging/walking have grown in popularity.
- Fitness for older adults has been a health trend for the past decade.

National Fitness Participation Rates

- Running/Jogging is up 7%
- Cross-Training Style Workouts is up 5.5%
- Stationary Cycling (Group) is up 5.3%
- Yoga is up 4%
- Dance, Step and Other Choreographed Exercise to Music is up 3.6%
- Walking for Fitness is up 2.7%
- Tai Chi is up 2.2%
- Swimming for Fitness is up 2%
- Pilates Training is up 1.7%
- Boot Camp Style Training is up 1%
- High Impact/Intensity Training is up 0.4%

Monmouth County Park System Trends

In 2018, we have noticed an increase in participation in pickleball, hiking, running, kayaking, volleyball, fishing, fitness classes and tai chi. We have seen an increase in participation in family programs. We have seen an increase in active adult programs, particularly group fitness programs. Our martial arts, soccer, baseball and basketball programs remain steady.

We have seen an increase in exercising in the outdoors such as trail users in our parks. We have also seen an increase in the number of hunters buying hunting permits this year. We have seen a decrease of interest in canoeing.

We have seen an increase in participation with the older population in pickleball, classes offered at the Creative Arts Center, trips, senior hikers, wellness programs, and in volunteers.

Community Interests

The recreational interests and needs of County residents are an important factor in considering the programs and services to be offered by the Monmouth County Park System. The Park System uses several means to identify community interests.

Community Surveys

The Park System periodically conducts county-wide public surveys to determine resident interests and the factors influencing participation and use. Such a survey was last administered in late 2008 by a professional survey firm and the final report was issued in March 2009. Key findings of the Citizen Opinion and Interest Survey include the following:

- 91% of respondent households had visited a County park in the last 12 months. 97% of respondents rated the condition of the parks they visited as either excellent (51%) or good (46%).
- 30% of respondent households had participated in a Park System recreation program or event. 90% of respondents rated the overall quality of the programs or events as either excellent (46%) or good (44%).
- Paved trails (55%) were the most frequently mentioned park facility that respondent households had visited over the past 12 months. Other frequently mentioned facilities included unpaved trails (49%), playgrounds (41%), and picnicking areas (36%).
- The Monmouth County Park System was the most frequently mentioned organization used for indoor and outdoor parks and recreation activities (45%). Other results included municipal parks and recreation (36%), private sports and fitness clubs (13%), and non-profit recreation facilities (11%).
- 37% of respondents indicated that Monmouth County parks, recreation facilities, and programs are of higher quality than other facilities and agencies they use. 45% of respondents described Monmouth County parks, recreation facilities, and programs as of equal quality.
- The potential benefits that are most important to respondent households include: preserve open space and the environment (52%), protect forested areas from development (34%), improve physical health and fitness (33%), make Monmouth County a more desirable place to live (32%), and protect historical attributes of Monmouth County (31%).

Direct User Input

Program evaluation forms are used not only to capture user feedback on a particular program (content, scheduling, ease of registration, instructor, pricing), but also to solicit ideas for new programs and services. Roughly 1,000 evaluation forms are distributed each year either randomly, at the request of a programmer, in response to a complaint, or for new programs and new instructors. User comments are forwarded to the appropriate area.

Informally, park visitors and program participants frequently share suggestions for programs and services directly with staff in the field. Comments are also offered via telephone and a general e-mail address provided on the Park System website. Comments are forwarded to the appropriate area.

Networking

Staff members maintain contacts with other recreation professionals and providers through clubs, groups, associations and committees. These contacts are valuable in keeping staff aware of the services available and unmet needs in the larger community.

Based on the public survey, direct user input, and networking, staff has identified the following as basic community recreation needs, met and unmet:

1. Opportunities for participation, appreciation, understanding and skill development in a range of program fields/interest categories that serve people of all ages and proficiency levels.
2. Convenient registration and scheduling options for programs and events, including evening and weekend programs that accommodate working people.
3. Convenient access to programs and events including multiple location choices and off-site programming that travels to local sites including schools, community centers, and active adult communities.
4. Facilities that support self-directed recreational opportunities such as golf, trails and playgrounds.
5. Programs, events and self-directed recreational opportunities that connect children and adults to nature and the outdoors.
6. Alternatives to reduced school recreational programming.
7. Social activities in a park setting such as group/family picnics and children's birthday parties.
8. Programming oriented to specific demographic groups such as singles, men only, women only, families, and parent/child programming.
9. Competitive and recreational opportunities for team and individual sports.
10. Free and inexpensive options for recreational opportunities.
11. Safe and well-maintained facilities that are properly supervised.
12. Facilities that support opportunities for resource-based recreation such as horseback riding, fishing, boating and birdwatching.
13. Year-round recreation opportunities supported by indoor facilities.

Community Opportunities

Recreational opportunities in the community available to County residents are an important factor in considering the programs and services to be offered by the Monmouth County Park System. A review of the current programs offered by municipalities, non-profit agencies and groups, and private entities was conducted for each of 11 major program/interest areas as well as special events, camps and senior citizen programming. Key findings are as follows:

Nature. Includes programs related to the environment, science, wildlife, geography, and natural history. Few municipalities offer nature-focused programs. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- Gateway Recreation Area–Sandy Hook. A National Park Service site at which a number of non-profit organizations offer nature-based programs. Brookdale Community College's Ocean Institute, the NJ Marine Sciences Consortium, and Clean Ocean Action all focus on coastal marine ecology and primarily serve schools, scouts, and other groups through on-site and traveling programs. Clean Ocean Action also sponsors events such as beach clean ups for the general public. NJ Audubon maintains the Sandy Hook Bird Observatory and offers seasonal birding and natural workshops on site as well as field trips throughout the region open to the general public.
- Poricy Park Conservancy in Middletown. Poricy Park Conservancy has been preserving 250 acres of open space, wildlife and their habitats, prehistoric fossil beds, and the Historic Murray Farmhouse since 1970. Poricy Park Conservancy is a non-profit organization, it depends primarily on memberships and donations to secure the educational, historical and natural resources at the park for this, and future generations.
- New Jersey Forest Resource Education Center in Jackson Township (Ocean County). State facility primarily serving general public and school groups. Permanent facility operates year round, weekdays only. Area of emphasis is forest stewardship.
- Jenkinsons's Aquarium in Point Pleasant (Ocean County). Private facility primarily serving general public and school groups. Open daily but general programming is limited. Areas of emphasis are the ocean and exotic marine wildlife.

Arts. Includes programs related to culinary arts, photography, literature, fine arts, and some handcrafts such as pottery and ceramics. In general, municipal offerings are introductory level and oriented to children and seniors. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- Brookdale Community College at multiple locations. County agency serves primarily adults. Operates multiple facilities year-round. Offers a full range of art classes including pottery and art shows.
- Middletown Arts Center in Middletown. Municipal/non-profit partnership serving all ages. Permanent facility operates year round. Offers a full range of art classes and art shows.
- YMCA Cultural Center in Red Bank. Non-profit membership organization serving primarily children. Permanent facility operates year round. Offers a broad range of art classes including pottery and ceramics as well as art shows.
- Monmouth Arts in Red Bank. Monmouth Arts provides programs and services that support the practice, presence, and influence of the arts and of artists throughout Monmouth County. Monmouth Arts is a leading, independent, 501c(3) arts advocacy organization that delivers needed programs and services to artists, member organizations, and art affiliates to ensure the arts thrive in every corner of Monmouth County.
- Many smaller non-profits offer fine art classes and shows throughout the county, primarily for adults.
- There are a number of small private businesses offering specialized studio instruction (pottery, glassblowing, fine art) as well as parties for children.

Crafts. Includes programs related primarily to handcrafts such as wood working, basket making, jewelry making, quilting, sewing, knitting and origami. Few municipalities offer craft-related programs.

- Craft retailers offer a range of classes. Examples include: Michael's – The Arts and Crafts Store has four locations in Monmouth County. Single session demonstrations and workshops, primarily family-oriented, are offered weekly for free or for the cost of supplies. A.C. Moore Arts & Crafts has four locations in Monmouth County and offers single and multi-session classes in painting, jewelry making, scrapbooking, knitting, crocheting, and candy making. A fee is charged for classes which are primarily adult oriented, but include some parent and child offerings. Jo-Ann Fabrics & Crafts has a single Monmouth County location. Free demonstrations are offered every Saturday and single and multi-session classes and parties are offered for a fee for adults and teens. Offerings include knitting, crocheting, quilting, sewing, scrapbooking, jewelry making, floral design, food crafting, and hair accessories. Small specialty craft retailers such as Red Bank Bead Company (jewelry making) and Woolly Monmouth (knitting) also offer group and private lessons for a fee.

Sports. Includes traditional sports such as soccer, football, softball, baseball, golf, tennis, basketball, in-line skating, running and swimming. All municipalities, either independently or in cooperation with other towns and non-profit groups, support recreational and competitive league play for youth in traditional field sports. Several larger municipalities with full-time recreation staff also support adult leagues and traveling teams, and provide sports instruction and clinics. Other key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- Major businesses offering multi-purpose sports facilities and programming include Atlantic Club (Wall), Ocean Sports Academy (Ocean Township), Tab Ramos Sports Center (Aberdeen), Good Sports USA (Wall), MOCO Sports Center (Oakhurst), Sports City (Farmingdale), Monroe Sports Center (Monroe), Sportika (Freehold & Manalapan), Capelli Sports Complex (Tinton Falls), and All Sport NJ (Long Branch). There are also four private ice hockey arenas, Jersey Shore Arena (Wall), Red Bank Armory (Red Bank), Middletown Sports Arena (Middletown), and Howell Ice Arena (Howell), as well as at least five indoor tennis centers. These facilities offer instruction for individuals, organize and operate leagues, tournaments and support teams and leagues organized by municipalities and schools.
- Major non-profits offering sports facilities and programming include The Community YMCA (Red Bank), YMCA of Western Monmouth County (Freehold Township), and Jewish Community Center (Deal). Each of these membership facilities serves all ages, operates year-round, and includes one or more swimming pools in their indoor facilities that can be rented by school teams and independent swimming clubs.
- Seasonal swim clubs operated by municipalities and non-profit groups and clubs are located throughout the County.
- The current golf course inventory in the County includes 16 private courses, two semiprivate courses, 17 daily-fee public courses (including the six courses operated by the Monmouth County Park System), and five driving ranges. Private and semi-private lessons are available at all courses. Clinics available to the general public are available at Twin Brook Golf Center and New Jersey Golf Performance Academy at Colts Neck Golf Club.

Fitness. Programs include fitness/exercise activities such as aerobics, yoga, pilates, tai chi, and dance which is fitness rather than performance oriented. The larger municipalities with full-time recreation staff offer a small selection of basic fitness programs for children and/or adults.

Other key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- 18 private fitness-specific businesses are located throughout the county. These membership facilities typically offer exercise and weight training equipment as well as instructor-led fitness programs.
- Brookdale Community College is a County run college which offers a health club membership.
- The major non-profit membership recreation providers include fitness rooms in their facilities and offer a wide range of fitness programs.
- The private multi-sports facilities and other smaller businesses offer sport-specific fitness training.

Gardening. Programs include instruction and clinics regarding the planting, display, care and maintenance of indoor and outdoor plants. Local garden clubs and retail garden centers offer occasional single session demonstrations.

History. Programs include those intended to expose participants to local heritage and social and cultural practices of the past. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- Howell Park Living History Farm in Lambertville (Mercer County). A Mercer County Park Commission facility serving general public, school groups, and parent/child. Operates year round. Programming emphasis is farming and farm life.
- Poricy Park in Middletown. Non-profit serving children and adults. Programming emphasis is colonial residence and gardens. Limited hours.
- Monmouth County Historical Association. Non-profit operates four colonial house museums open seasonally, weekends only and by appointment for school groups. Also offers trunk shows.
- Gateway Recreation Area–Sandy Hook. A National Park Service site which includes multiple museums and historic structures related to lighthouses and Fort Hancock’s military history that are open to the general public. Seasons and hours are variable. Guided tours are offered periodically.
- Twin Lights in Highlands. A State-owned historic site which operates a museum open to the general public year-round. Group tours are available by advanced reservation.
- Many local historical groups operate small museums with limited hours and offer periodic walking tours, house tours, and craft workshops.

Outdoors. Programs include outdoor-based sports such as hiking, biking, sailing, skiing, kayaking, climbing, and horseback riding. Few municipalities offer outdoor-focused programs. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- Kayak and canoe classes and trips are offered by one other public group (Ocean County Parks), and private entities such as LL Bean and REI. Kayak and canoe rentals are available at Paddle Out in Manasquan.
- Sailing and safe boating classes are offered by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- A number of private farms and academies throughout the County offer horseback riding instruction and trail riding. Several municipalities offer programs on horse care through an independent contractor.
- Rock climbing clinics, classes and birthday parties are offered at a number of places statewide including the Gravity Vault in Middletown, Garden State Rocks in Morganville, Ultimate Outdoor Adventures in Lincroft, The Gravity Vault in Hoboken, and Rockville Climbing Center in Hamilton.

Performing Arts. Includes theater, music, and performance-oriented dance. Few municipalities offer performing arts related programs. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- Middletown Arts Center in Middletown. Municipal/non-profit partnership serving all ages. Permanent facility operates year-round. Offers a full range of theater, voice and music classes and productions for children and adults.
- Count Basie Theater in Red Bank. Non-profit serving children and adults. Offers classes/workshops in screenwriting, dance, songwriting, voice, acting, and musical theater and also hosts professional music and dramatic productions.

- Phoenix Productions in Red Bank is a non-profit theater organization committed to providing quality theatrical experiences.
- Theater workshops for children through seniors including acting, musical theater, improvisation, and monologue are offered by a variety of private and non-profit providers including: Center State Dance & Theater in Morganville & Oakhurst, Actors Playground School of Theater in Freehold, School of Music and Drama in Little Silver, Cinematique Film Classes in Eatontown, Improv Jam Comedy Club in Red Bank, and 57 Street/Showcase Theater in Red Bank.
- Dance classes beginning at preschool age through adult including ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, hip hop, funk, zumba, street dance, musical theater and creative movement are offered by a variety of private providers including Colts Neck Dance and Performing Arts in Colts Neck, Arthur Murray Dance Center of Red Bank, Kick Dance Studios in Rumson, NJ Dance Center in Tinton Falls, Fred Astaire Dance Studio of Red Bank and Manasquan, The Academy of Dance Arts in Tinton Falls, Dance with Melody in Middletown, Kick Dance Studios in Fair Haven, USA Ballroom in Shrewsbury, Movement Dance Academy in Oceanport, L A Dance Center of the Arts in Middletown, South Street Salsa in Marlboro, Monmouth Academy of Ballet in Red Bank, Howell Academy of Dance in Howell, Quick Quick Slow Ballroom Dance Studio in Marlboro, Shoreline Dance Academy LLC in Ocean Grove, Perna Dance Center in Hazlet, and Center Stage Dance & Theatre School in Oakhurst also providing children and adult classes in foxtrot, waltz, tango, wing, rumba, cha-cha, samba, mambo/salsa, hustle and meringue.
- Music classes including guitar, drums, bass, piano, horns, strings, woodwinds, vocals, and music theory, as well as workshops in rock, funk, rhythm & blues, jazz, blues, rhythm sections, percussion, and songwriting are provided by Shore Music Academy in Oakhurst, Big Beat Music in Neptune Township, Monmouth Music in Red Bank, Freehold Music Center in Freehold, The Musician's Studio in Red Bank, Monmouth Conservatory of Music in Red Bank, School of Rock in various locations, Lincroft Music in Lincroft, Rock & Music Academy in Red Bank, School of Music and Drama in Little Silver, Rock It in Red Bank and others.

Personal Development. Programs related to self-improvement and child development/exploration. Brookdale Community College's Business and Community Development Office is the key provider of a wide range of self-improvement programs for adults. While several municipalities offer limited child development/exploration programs, the key providers of this type of program serving Monmouth County include the following:

- Gymboree, a global company, offers its curriculum of play and music for children aged 0 to 5 years at three Monmouth County locations.
- Tiny Voices Music Together, a global company, has four licensed directors offering its curriculum of music-based child development programs at more than 10 locations throughout Monmouth County.
- Dancing Bears is an early childhood music class open to children ages 6 weeks - 4 years old with parent or caregiver. During these 45-minute music classes participants explore a variety of different instruments, enjoy wonderful sing alongs and get their bodies moving and grooving. Classes are run in various locations throughout NJ.
- Miss Melissa's Aardvarks are preschool classes developed to encourage and enhance early childhood development through music and movement. The classes are a unique blend of contemporary rock & roll music for kids coupled with classic teaching techniques to create an experience unlike any in children's music before. Classes are run in various locations throughout NJ.

Therapeutic Recreation. Includes programs for persons with physical or cognitive disabilities. Few municipalities offer recreation programming for persons with disabilities. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- School districts, subject to the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, offer special services to children ages 3-21 that have been classified as having special needs.
- Several non-profits offer opportunities for sports participation (Challenger Sports, Special Olympics) and others offer sports, as well as trips, special events, social gatherings, dance, parent/child activities, and computer activities (Arc of Monmouth, Family Resource Associates, Children's Center of Monmouth County, Camp Happiness and CPC Behavioral Healthcare).

Camps. Many entities offer summer camp opportunities. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- A majority of municipalities offer a variety of half-day and full-day camps for durations of a week or more. Most are sports or arts and crafts oriented. Some are restricted to or give preference to residents.
- Each of the major non-profit recreation entities (YMCA of Western Monmouth – Camp Topanemus in Millstone and Camp Zehnder in Wall, The Community YMCA, Girls and Boys Clubs of Monmouth County in Red Bank, and Jewish Community Center of Greater Monmouth County in Deal) offer a broad range of half-day and full-day camps for their members. The Boy Scouts (Quail Hill in Manalapan) and Girl Scouts (Camp Sacajawea in Farmingdale) also offer basic day camps.
- Each of the major private multi-purpose sports facilities (Atlantic Club in Red Bank and Manasquan, GoodSports USA in Wall, Ocean Sports Academy in Ocean Township, and Tab Ramos Sports Center in Aberdeen) offer summer sports camps featuring locally known coaches and instructors. Atlantic Club also offers a variety of special themed camps including art, dance and computer camps. Several private summer camps also offer a broad range of half-day and full-day camps including Ivy League Day Camp in Manalapan, Seashore Day Camp in Long Branch, Monmouth Day Camp in Middletown, Rolling Hills Country Roads Day Camp in Manalapan, Pine Grove Day Camp in Wall, Black Bear Lake Day Camp in Millstone, Young Peoples Day Camp in Freehold, Rising Treetops at Oakhurst, and Frogbridge Day Camp in Millstone.
- Monmouth University and several private high schools (Red Bank Catholic in Red Bank, St. John Vianney in Holmdel, and Christian Brothers Academy in Lincroft) offer sports camps. Brookdale Community College offers a variety of sports camps as well as arts, technology and science camps.

Senior Recreation. Many entities provide recreation opportunities for senior citizens. Key providers serving Monmouth County include the following:

- A majority of municipalities offer a variety of programs for their senior residents at no or reduced fees and at least 11 have staffed Senior Centers serving this population.
- Non-profits offering a broad range of programs for senior citizens on a fee basis include YMCA of Western Monmouth (Freehold Township), The Community YMCA (Red Bank and other locations), Jewish Community Center of Greater Monmouth County (Deal), and Senior Citizens Activity Network Learning Center (Eatontown).
- The more than 25 active adult communities in Monmouth County generally include recreation facilities such as pools, tennis courts, fitness centers, community rooms, and arts and crafts spaces. Several also include golf courses.

Special Events. Municipalities, churches, fire companies, retail/business associations, special interest non-profits, and others host a range of special events across the County and throughout the calendar year including fairs, circuses, festivals (cultural, food, arts, crafts, music, film), parades, races, and fireworks displays.

Program Staffing and Organization

The bulk of staff positions assigned to program-related functions are located within the Visitor Services Department. This includes both personnel directly responsible for the design and delivery of programs and persons performing program support functions. The Operations Department also has personnel who both design and deliver programs and provide support functions.

Visitor Services

It is the mission of the Visitor Services Department “to provide quality recreational facilities, services, and experiences that exceed our customers’ expectations and improve their quality of life.” This departmental mission statement and those of its 11 divisions were developed as part of the implementation of the 2001 Recreation Services Plan.

Eight of the 11 divisions within Visitor Services are directly responsible for program design and delivery. Their current mission statements describe them as follows:

- Nature Interpretation (Area #302) – “To provide positive, enriching experiences that educate people about their environment and encourage stewardship of existing open space and park land.”
- Cultural Services (Area #303) and Creative Arts (Area #312) – “To provide an instructional and educational outlet for creative arts, crafts, culinary arts, performing arts, and health and wellness programming.”
- Urban Recreation (Area #305) – “To provide recreation opportunities to residents of low-income and state-designated urban areas of Monmouth County.”
- Therapeutic Recreation (Area #313) – “To provide access to recreation opportunities for individuals with disabilities in order to enhance physical, cognitive, emotional, and social functioning as well as a sense of belonging to the community.”
- Equestrian Division (Area #314) – “To provide fundamental equestrian experiences for people of all abilities, with a major emphasis on offering benefits to individuals with disabilities by helping them to develop to their full potential.”
- Outdoor Adventures (Area #323) – “To encourage, develop, and promote personal well-being, social interaction, and environmental awareness through a variety of outdoor adventure activities.”
- Sports and Fitness (Area #333) – “To provide recreational, educational, and instructional opportunities for all ages and ability levels which develop skill and interest in lifetime sports and fitness activities.”
- Fort Monmouth Recreation Center (Area #343) - “To provide a balanced variety of year-round quality recreation programs, services and facilities that serve as an integral part of the Monmouth County community. To proactively and consistently meet the needs of all populations of Monmouth County.”

The other three divisions provide program support. Their mission statements describe them as follows:

- Visitor Services Administration (Area #301) – “To provide quality recreational facilities, services, and experiences that exceed our customers’ expectations and improve their quality of life.” This division provides clerical and managerial support to the other Visitor Services divisions.
- Marketing and Communications (Area #301) – “To provide existing and potential customers, both internal and external, with information about Park System activities, facilities, and services and encourage them to enjoy the benefits that are available.” This division maintains the agency website; publishes brochures, newsletters, and activity directories; issues press releases; maintains social media pages; manages advertising efforts; and makes community presentations to advertise Park System programs and facilities and promote the personal and community benefits of leisure pursuits.
- Volunteer Services (Area #105) – “To provide a meaningful, ongoing volunteer program in which individuals and groups are given the opportunity to become involved with the Monmouth County Park System, thereby increasing citizen awareness of the agency and providing valuable support to Park System staff and facilities.” This division recruits, trains and deploys volunteers to seasonal and year-round volunteer opportunities throughout the Park System.

Operations and Maintenance

It is the mission of the Operations and Maintenance Department “to provide a variety of recreational facilities and opportunities to park visitors in a safe and pleasant environment while protecting important cultural and natural resources for present and future generations.”

In addition to performing facility maintenance, ten functional areas within Operations and Maintenance, including six golf courses, also design and deliver advertised and requested programs. Their mission statements describe them as follows:

- Golf Courses (Areas #108, 428, 429, 430, 431, 437, and 445) – “To provide a system of golf facilities, programs, and services that support the recreational needs of players of various skill levels in a well-maintained and environmentally sound setting.”
- Historic Longstreet Farm (Area #408) – “To promote an appreciation for Monmouth County farm life at the end of the 19th century, preserving historic structures and practices through interpretation and professional research.”
- Deep Cut Gardens (Area #423) – “To provide positive, enriching experiences that educate people about gardening and the natural environment.”
- Historic Walnford (Area #426) – “To preserve and maintain the structures, settings, and collections of the Waln family through five generations in western Monmouth County, highlighting their role in the region’s industrial, economic, social, and environmental history through factual, research-based interpretation.”

Operations staff are the primary providers of opportunities for self-directed recreation within the Park System, responsible for the daily maintenance and operation of all recreation facilities including but not limited to golf courses, buildings, a marina, lakes, forests, beaches and fields, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, picnic areas and trails. Field staff are frequently the public’s first personal contact with the Park System and often answer questions regarding recreation services. They are also responsible for the pre-program set up and post-program break down of all on-site program facilities including maintenance, security and assistance with parking. They support some of the program promotion by such actions as erecting and maintaining public message boards, information kiosks and bulletin boards and stocking brochure racks, and provide curatorial and historic research assistance in exhibit design and program development.

In both Visitor Services and Operations and Maintenance, full- and permanent part-time staff are supplemented by a combination of seasonal employees, hourly employees, program employees and independent contractors. Seasonal employees are hired to fill positions for a period of three months or less. Hourly employees are hired to fill positions funded by the operating budget that may extend up to nine months a year. Program employees are hired and trained to work on a specific program or programs. Independent contractors are paid a fee to provide a program for which they are specially trained or skilled.

Other departments that provide critical program support services include the following:

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Department provides a number of distinct functions in support of the delivery of recreation services including the following:

1. Main Receptionist - Often serves as first contact point where public interacts with the Park System. Directs calls and inquiries throughout the system to the appropriate personnel.
2. Payroll - Processes necessary paperwork to ensure that staff is paid.
3. Accounts Payable - Encumbers, or sets-aside money for purchases. Processes payment for goods and services purchased by the programming areas.
4. Accounts Receivable - Processes and accounts for outstanding balances due on services rendered (reserved programs). Provides reports on a variety of program data that is managed through the Park System computer.

5. Computer Services – Maintains phone service and the network server. Provides access to computer and telephonic equipment.
6. Program Registration – Registration for programs is available in person and by phone, mail and on line. The registration staff serves as the first contact point for people who wish to participate in Park System recreation programs or reserve facilities. They assist prospective program participants in the selection of programs and manage registration for programs including inputting program data into the computer, sending registration confirmations, notifying registrants of any program cancellations, and maintaining waiting lists for popular programs.

Purchasing

The Purchasing Department supports recreation services by providing the mechanism to procure products and services required in the delivery of recreation programs and maintenance of recreation facilities. All purchases, regardless of size and including supplies, tickets, equipment, clothing, event vendors, and food, are subject to the same purchasing procedure.

Central Supply is a division of the Purchasing Department. This office receives delivery of all equipment and supplies purchased by the Park System and disburses them to the appropriate areas. They also deliver bulk mailings to the Post Office.

Personnel

The Personnel Department manages the hiring, promotion and termination of employees in accordance with the State of New Jersey civil service requirements, organizes an annual job fair, solicits job candidates on the Park System website, and maintains a file of job applications.

The Personnel Department is also responsible for employee training and safety. Department staff organize in-service training and arrange for out-of-house training. New employees are oriented using a standard checklist and most program personnel receive training in First Aid, CPR, and Defensive Driving. The Department's Employee Safety Program develops programs to ensure that the organization is in compliance with State and Federal safety regulations and that employees are provided with safe and healthy workplaces.

Acquisition and Design Department

The Land Preservation division within the Acquisition and Design Department is responsible for the purchase of sites that serve as the locations for most Park System programs. The Planning division assists in the development of the overall Park System capital plan for improvements and the development of master plan documents that establish the intended use and management of each park area. The Design division designs new facilities and facility improvements necessary for the delivery of programs and for self-directed recreation. The Graphics division designs and prints program promotional materials such as fliers, posters, signs, race applications and envelope stuffers. This division also provides design services for temporary and permanent exhibits and for materials used in programs such as t-shirt designs.

Construction and Repair

Construction and Repair, a division within the Operations and Maintenance Department, provides carpentry, sign-making, painting, plumbing and electrical services to facilities where programs and events are held.

Equipment Services

Equipment Services, a division within the Operations and Maintenance Department, maintains vehicles and equipment used directly (i.e. specialized trailers, golf carts and mini-buses) and indirectly (i.e. lawn mowers, utility vehicles, boat engines) in support of recreation services.

Other

Staff from many Park System departments including Visitor Services, Operations and Maintenance, Administration, and Acquisition and Design, are asked to speak to neighborhood, civic, professional and other groups about the Park System, individual parks, open space resources, and technical aspects of park and resource protection and management. Although similar to a reserved program, these presentations are not reported as programs.

The Friends of the Parks is a non-profit, charitable organization comprised of area citizens and businesses committed to the support of the Park System. The Friends help fund the Recreation Assistance Program which provides Monmouth County's urban residents with transportation to County parks, scholarships for park programs, and subsidized camps and activities. The programming areas are also aided by the Friends efforts to solicit sponsorships for special events and to fund park facilities that are used in providing recreation programming.

Special People United to Ride (SPUR), an independent non-profit organization, partners with the Park System to improve the lives of citizens with disabilities by providing financial support to the horseback riding program for individuals with developmental and physical disabilities. They contributed to the construction of an indoor riding facility and offer scholarships, purchase horses and equipment, and underwrite other aspects of the program.

Program Offerings

One of the key objectives of the Recreation Services Plan is to provide year-round opportunities for persons of all ages, interests and skills from throughout Monmouth County to engage in a variety of recreation activities.

Advertised programs are programs scheduled for a particular time and place that are advertised and open to the public at large for registration. Below is information about the distribution of 2018 advertised programs by interest and by season. Statistics are provided for programs offered and programs held; reasons that offered programs might be cancelled include failure to meet the minimum registration, inclement weather, and unavailability of either the instructor or the facility due to unforeseen circumstances. In 2018, a total of 4,439 advertised programs were offered of which 3,067, or 69%, were held.

Distribution of 2018 Advertised Programs by Interest

The program interest categories used here include programs designed, developed and run by multiple divisions of the Park System. The categories can be defined as follows:

- **Camps** include multi-session summer programs offered for children and teens. Camps restricted to persons with cognitive or physical disabilities are reported under the Therapeutic interest category. Other program interest categories represented in the offerings listed as camps include arts, crafts, sports, living history, nature, outdoor adventures, and performing arts.
- **Arts & Crafts** include programs related to culinary arts, photography, literature, fine arts, and some handcrafts such as pottery, ceramics, wood working, basket making, jewelry making, quilting, sewing, knitting, origami, and craft fairs. Programs include those offered at Park System sites.
- **Sports** programs include traditional sports such as soccer, golf, tennis, in-line skating, running and swimming. Programs include instruction as well as clinics.
- **Fitness** programs include fitness and exercise activities such as aerobics and tai chi, and dance which is not performance-oriented.
- **Gardening** programs include the planting, display, care and maintenance of indoor and outdoor plants. Programs include hands-on instruction and clinics as well as trips to gardens, flower shows, and similar venues.
- **Nature** includes programs related to the environment, science, wildlife, geography and natural history. Programs include those offered at Park System sites as well as trips and tours to museums and natural areas.
- **Outdoor Adventure** programs include outdoor-based sports such as hiking, biking, sailing, skiing, kayaking and horseback riding. Programs include instruction and clinics, as well as excursions to participate in outdoor-based sports.
- **Performing Arts** includes theater, music and performance-oriented dance. Programs include instruction, opportunities to perform, and trips to see professional performances.
- **Personal Development** programs relate to self-improvement and child development/exploration and include topics such as managing money, career planning, pet training, language, interpersonal communication, and basic school and play skills for children.
- **Special Interest** includes holiday programs, social recreation, special interest, theme programs, dog obedience, parent/child play groups, outreach, and family entertainment.
- **Trips** include those trips and tours in which travel itself or multiple interest categories versus a single interest category is the primary objective. Other trips and tours are included in the other interest categories.

- **Therapeutic** includes *all* programs that are restricted to persons with physical or cognitive disabilities. Other program interest categories that may be represented in the offerings listed as Therapeutic include camps, crafts, fitness/sports, nature, outdoor adventure, performing arts, self-improvement and travel.

Program offering-Distribution of 2018 advertised programs by interest

Program Offering by Category	2018 Offered	2018 Held	2018 Percentage of Held Programs	2018 Percentage of Overall Offered Programs
Camps	592	452	76%	15%
Sports	1,476	940	64%	31%
Gardening	51	25	49%	1%
Special Interest	318	215	68%	7%
Arts & Crafts	671	510	76%	17%
Fitness	435	333	77%	11%
Nature	353	194	55%	6%
Outdoor Adventures	194	128	66%	4%
Performing Arts	94	63	67%	2%
Personal Development	148	109	74%	4%
Trips	21	18	86%	1%
Therapeutic	86	80	93%	3%
Totals	4,439	3,067	69%	

Distribution of 2018 Advertised Programs by Season

The current computerized registration system recognizes the scheduling of programs by season. Consistent with that system, the quarters are as follows:

- **Winter** includes programs that are held or begin in the months of December, January and February.
- **Spring** includes programs that are held or begin in the months of March, April and May.
- **Summer** includes programs that are held or begin in the months of June, July and August.
- **Fall** includes programs that are held or begin in the months of September, October and November.

Distribution of 2018 Advertised Programs by Season

Program Offering by Season	2018 Offered	2018 Held	2018 Percentage of Held Programs	2018 Percentage of Overall offered Programs
Winter	634	447	71%	15%
Spring	1,070	781	73%	26%
Summer	1,705	1,112	65%	36%
Fall	1,028	708	69%	23%
Totals	4,437	3,048	69%	

Distribution of 2018 Advertised Programs by Age

The age categories used here are consistent with those used in the current computerized registration system. The categories are defined as follows:

- **Infant-PreK** programs are those programs whose registration is open to children aged 5 and younger. These programs may or may not require a parent or adult to accompany them.
 - *In 2018, 1,009 Infant-PreK level programs were offered, of which 786 (78%) were held.*
- **Grade School** programs are those programs whose registration is open to persons aged 6-11. These programs may or may not be offered with a parent to participate.
 - *In 2018, 1,624 Grade School level programs were offered, of which 1,241 (76%) were held.*
- **Junior High** programs are those programs whose registration is open to children aged 12-14. These programs may or may not be offered to allow a parent and their Junior High level child to participate in together.
 - *In 2018, 848 Junior High level programs were offered, of which 682 (80%) were held.*
- **High School** programs are those programs whose registration is open to children aged 15-17.
 - *In 2018, 579 High School level programs were offered, of which 465 (80%) were held.*
- **Adult** programs are those programs whose registration is open to persons aged 18 and older.
 - *In 2018, 1,216 adult level programs were offered, of which 911 (75%) were held.*
- **Senior** programs are those programs whose registration is open specifically to adults aged 55 and over.
 - *In 2018, 44 Senior level programs were offered, of which 42 (95%) were held.*
- **All Ages** programs are those programs whose registration is open to a wide range of the age groups listed above. All of these programs require that a participant under the age of 18 has a parent or adult participating as well.
 - *In 2018, 233 programs for All Ages were offered, of which 176 (76%) were held.*

The table below shows the number of programs advertised by interest category that were offered (O) and held (H) in 2018 for each age group above. Note that some programs may have been advertised for more than one age group.

Distribution of 2018 Advertised Programs by Age

	Infant-PreK		Grade School		Junior High		High School		Adults		Seniors		All Ages	
	O	H	O	H	O	H	O	H	O	H	O	H	O	H
Arts & Crafts	61	49	139	99	54	36	49	39	330	289	0	0	8	5
Canine Classes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	8	0	0	0	0
Culinary Arts	17	12	53	31	27	11	4	3	83	54	0	0	4	4
Education & Enrichment	74	55	79	41	47	35	33	38	67	50	0	0	8	2
Equestrian	0	0	5	5	10	10	9	9	21	17	0	0	0	0
Family Fun	5	5	6	6	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	13	8
Health & Wellness	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	78	55	0	0	8	2
Horticulture	0	0	3	0	2	1	5	3	35	19	0	0	0	0
Nature	29	21	61	22	88	37	79	33	88	29	0	0	99	74
Outdoor Adventures	44	41	58	42	36	16	31	14	101	67	0	0	4	4
Performing Arts	32	19	60	38	10	5	7	3	26	17	0	0	4	3
Play Groups	151	111	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sports & Fitness	463	383	400	302	65	38	55	31	265	202	18	16	31	23
Therapeutic Recreation	0	0	0	0	2	2	28	27	29	28	26	26	0	0
Trips	0	0	0	0	6	5	9	6	15	8	0	0	27	24
Summer Camps	14	11	387	354	268	259	51	46	42	41	0	0	0	0
Swim Lessons	119	79	372	300	229	223	216	210	27	27	0	0	27	27
TOTAL	1,009	786	1,624	1,241	848	682	579	465	1,216	911	44	42	233	176

The table below shows the population, land area, and the County Park acreage in each region.

	County	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3
Total Population (2016)	626,812	269,366	207,122	150,324
Percent of Total Population (2016)	100%	43%	33%	24%
Total land area (acres)	313,259	99,750	92,027	121,482
Percent of Total land area (acres)	100%	32%	29%	39%
County Park acreage (2018)	16,256	4,421	3,521	8,314
Percent of County Park acreage (2018)	100%	27%	22%	51%
County Park acreage per person (acres)	0.0259	0.0164	0.0170	0.0553
County Park acreage relative to total area	5.1894%	4.4320%	3.8260%	6.8442%

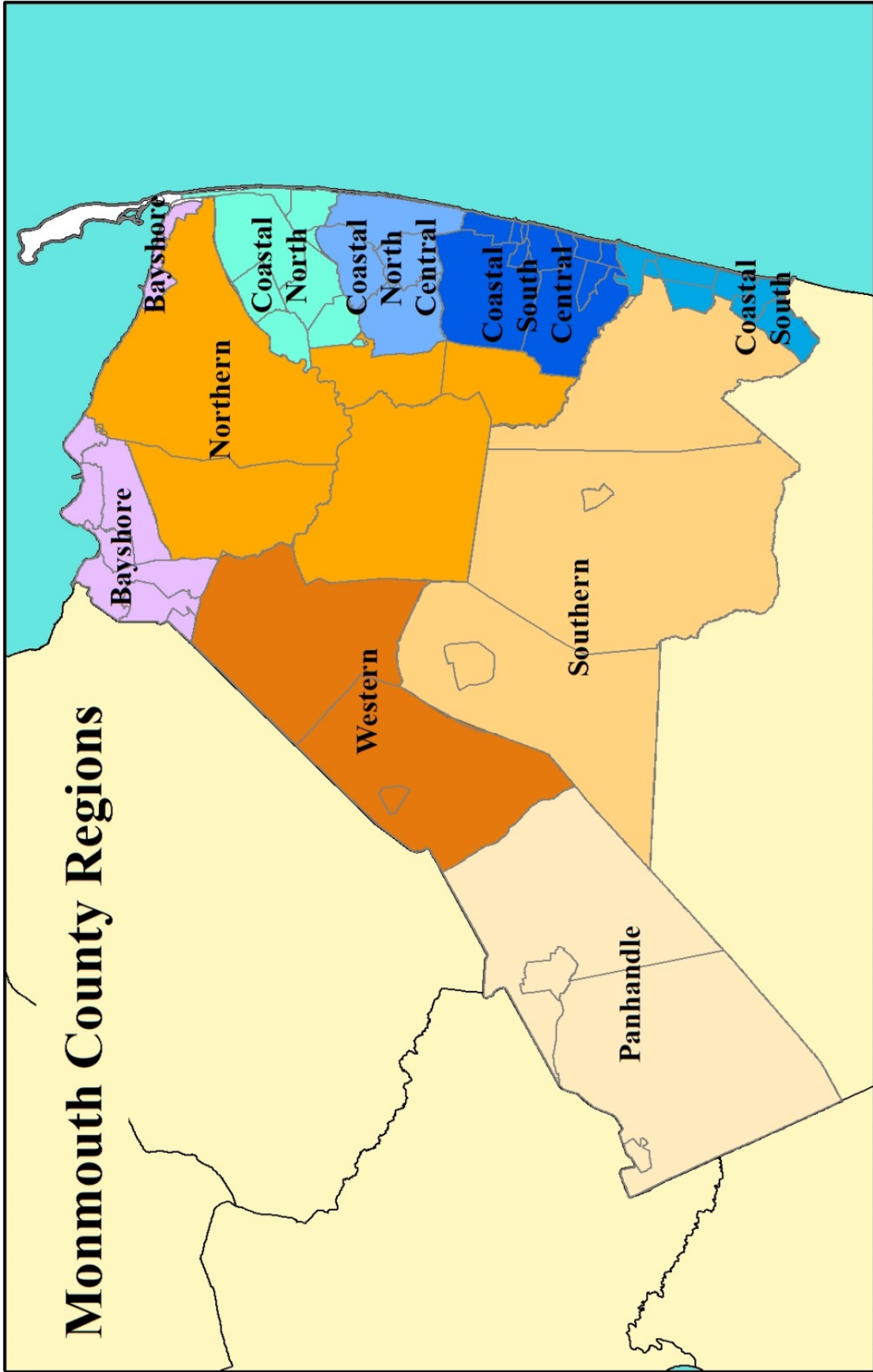
Distribution of 2018 Advertised Programs by Geographic Area

Programs are listed by the geographic area of the county in which they were held. For programs that travel outside the county, the in-county point of origin is used. A map of the geographic areas used is provided on the next page. They can be described as follows:

- **Northern Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following Monmouth County communities: Middletown, Tinton Falls, Holmdel, and Colts Neck.
- **Southern Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following Monmouth County communities: Howell, Freehold Township, Wall, Freehold Borough, and Farmingdale.
- **Panhandle Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following Monmouth County communities: Allentown, Millstone, Roosevelt, and Upper Freehold.
- **Western Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following Monmouth County communities: Marlboro, Manalapan, and Englishtown.
- **Bayshore Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following Monmouth County communities: Hazlet, Aberdeen, Matawan, Keyport, Union Beach, Keansburg, Highlands, and Atlantic Highlands.
- **Coastal Monmouth-Northern Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following central and Monmouth County communities: Red Bank, Rumson, Fair Haven, Little Silver, Shrewsbury Borough, Shrewsbury Township, Monmouth Beach, and Sea Bright.
- **Coastal Monmouth-North Central Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following central and Monmouth County communities: Long Branch, Eatontown, West Long Branch, and Oceanport.
- **Coastal Monmouth-South Central Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following central and Monmouth County communities: Neptune Township, Ocean, Asbury Park, Neptune City, Bradley Beach, Avon By The Sea, Interlaken, Deal, Allenhurst, and Loch Arbour Village.
- **Coastal Monmouth-Southern Region** includes all park areas or community program locations in the following central and Monmouth County communities: Manasquan, Belmar, Brielle, Spring Lake Heights, Spring Lake, Sea Girt, and Lake Como.

Distribution of 2018 Advertised Programs by Geographic Area

Regions	Number of Programs Offered	Number of Programs Held	Number of Parks in Region	Population as of 2010
Northern Region	3,638	2,886	12	111,329
Southern Region	187	183	6	126,804
Panhandle Region	60	34	4	20,178
Western Region	125	87	2	80,910
Bayshore Region	28	24	2	80,334
Coastal Monmouth-Northern Region	68	61	0	41,040
Coastal Monmouth-Northern Central Region	83	54	2	57,357
Coastal Monmouth-South Central Region	143	130	2	84,670
Coastal Monmouth-Southern Region	9	3	1	23,458



Reserved programs are those programs that are requested by and held for a group at an agreed upon time and place. A menu of reserved programs is available and others can be custom packaged for groups. A total of 1,426 reserved group programs were held in 2018.

Distribution of 2018 Reserved Programs by Interest

In 2018, 1,426 reserved programs were held with a total attendance of 30,193.

- **Arts & Crafts** - 6 reserved programs were held with a total attendance of 84.
- **Nature** - 726 reserved programs were held with a total attendance of 19,158.
- **Outdoor Adventures** - 80 reserved programs were held with a total attendance of 2,053.
- **Historic** - 323 reserved programs were held with a total attendance of 6,161.
- **Birthday parties** - 125 reserved programs were held with a total attendance of 1,871.
- **Equestrian** - 166 reserved programs were held with a total attendance of 866.

In addition to the advertised and reserved programs listed here, the Urban & Community Recreation Division conducts free and discounted programs for economically disadvantaged residents at its Coastal Activity Center in Asbury Park, as well as at municipal and non-profit sites in the urban neighborhoods of the county. Other outreach services offered by the division include bus transportation for groups to travel to a county park to participate in a program.

Recreation Facilities

A range of recreation facilities to support community opportunities for directed and self-directed recreation is essential to meeting the goals and objectives of the Recreation Services Plan. An inventory of the outdoor and indoor recreation facilities owned and/or managed by the Monmouth County Park System currently available for leader-directed programs, Park System events, and activities/events by others facilitated by the Park System, as well as available to individuals and groups under only general supervision, is included on the next page.

**Monmouth County Park System
Facilities Inventory as of 2018**

Site ID.	Facility Name	Park Type	Total Acres	OUTDOOR FACILITIES											
				Playground	Paved Trails (miles)	Unpaved Trails (miles)	Shelter Building	Group Picnic Area	Scattered Picnic Tables	Golf (holes)	Fishing Access	Boating Access	Beach	Courts	
406	Shark River Park	Regional Park	990	1		8.7	2	2	√		√			2 Shuffleboard 2 horseshoe	
407	Holmdel Park	Regional Park	818	2	0.5	10.65	3	3	√		√			4 Tennis	
408	Longstreet Farm	Special Use Area	9												
409	Turkey Swamp Park	Regional Park	2281	4		9.8	2	2	√		√	√			
410	Howell Park Golf Course	Golf Course	348								18				
411	Thompson Park	Regional Park	667	1	5	8.6	2	2	√		√	√		4 Tennis	
412	Baysholm Tract	Open Lands	71												
413	Durand Tract	Open Lands	94												
414	East Freehold Showgrounds	Special Use Area	81												
415	Tatum Park	Regional Park	366	1		6.4			√						
416	Shark River Golf Course	Golf Course	176								18				
417	Hartshorne Woods Park	Regional Park	794		2	11			√		√				
418	Mount Mitchell Scenic Overlook	Special Use Area	12	1											
419	Huber Woods Park	Regional Park	381			8.5			√						
420	Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park	Special Use Area	38	1	0.3		2	2	√		√	√	√	3 sand volleyball	
421	Hominy Hill Golf Course	Golf Course	262			0.8					18				
422	Weltz Park	Open Lands	169			1.9									
423	Deep Cut Gardens	Special Use Area	54			0.7			√						
424	Clayton Park	Regional Park	450			5.7			√		√				
425	Manasquan Reservoir	Recreation Area	1208	1		7.5			√		√	√			
426	Historic Wainford	Special Use Area	36						√		√				
427	Pine Brook Golf Course	Golf Course	61								18				
432	Dorbrook Recreation Area	Recreation Area	535	1	2.4	0.2	3	3	√					2 basketball 4 horseshoe 4 Tennis	
433	Monmouth Cove Marina	Special Use Area	10						√		√	√			
434	Charleston Springs Golf Course	Golf Course	789			2			√		36				
435	Fisherman's Cove Conservation Area	Conservation Area	55			2					√		√		
436	Sunnyside Equestrian Center	Special Use Area	135		1	0.4									
438	Henry Hudson Trail	Greenway	215		22	2			√		√		√		
439	Bayshore Waterfront Park	Regional Park	229			0.7			√		√	√	√		
440	Manasquan River Greenway	Greenway	478								√	√			
441	Crosswicks Creek Greenway	Greenway	2346								√	√			
442	Big Brook Park	Regional Park	432	1	1.8		5				√			1 Basketball	
443	Wolf Hill Recreation Area	Recreation Area	92						√						
444	Bel-Aire Golf Course	Golf Course	114								27				
446	Metedeconk River Greenway	Greenway	457												
447	DeBois Creek Recreation Area	Recreation Area	165			1.7									
448	Perrineville Lake Park	Regional Park	1247			4.8					√	√			
449	Yellow Brook Tract	Open Lands	369												
450	Union Transportation Trail	Greenway	110			8.6									
451	Wickatunk Recreation Area	Recreation Area	98												
452	Swimming River Greenway	Greenway	5												
453	Fort Monmouth Recreation Area	Recreation Area	9				1	1						1 Sport Court	
454	Freneau Woods Park	Regional Park	210												
455	Swimming River Park	Special Use Area	18									√			
Total			17284	14	34.8	141	20	15			135	16	14	4	27

				INDOOR FACILITIES						
Sports Fields	Open Play Fields	In-line Skating	Off-Leash Dog Area	Public Restrooms	Food	Environmental/ Visitor Center	Multi-purpose Program Space	Specialized Program Space	Other Facilities and Comments	
	√			1	vending				Rental picnic shelter	
	√			2	vending			2	Two rental picnic shelters, arboretum; cross country course; Activity Center; seasonal ice skating and sledding	
						Visitor Center		0	Living History Farm; interpretive displays	
2 soccer	√			4	vending				Two rental picnic shelters, family and group camping; archery, boat rentals	
				1	vending mobile cart				Golf Center; warm-up range	
4 soccer 1 rugby	√		√	3	vending	Visitor Center	5	5	Rental picnic shelter; challenge course	
									Under long term lease to Freehold Twp.	
									Site of County Fair, horse shows, dog shows, special events.	
	√			2	vending		4	1	Special events	
				1	vending mobile cart				Golf Center	
	√			1					Cabin; military fortifications; views of Atlantic Ocean	
									9/11 Memorial; views of Sandy Hook Bay, Atlantic Ocean and NYC	
	√			1	vending	Environmental	1	2		
		√		3	counter service		1		Guarded beach/swimming; skate park	
				1	counter service mobile cart		1		Golf Center; warm-up range	
				1			1		Horticultural Gardens; reference library; compost demonstration area	
	√									
				2	vending	Visitor and Environmental	2	2	Boat ramp, boat rentals, fishing pier	
				1			3	2	Historic mill village; interpretive displays	
				1	vending		1		Golf Center	
1 softball 3 soccer 1 football 1 field hockey/ lacrosse 1 football/ lacrosse	√	√		2	vending		7	2	Three rental picnic shelters; sprayground; 2 outdoor instructional swimming pools; model airplane area	
				1	vending				154 wet slips; 58-rack storage	
				1	counter service mobile cart vending		1		Golf Center; warm-up range; short game area	
							1		No swimming	
				1			2	1	Indoor horseback riding arena; stables	
				1			2	1		
				1			1	1	No swimming; fishing pier and jetties; view of Raritan Bay and NYC	
1 Basketball	√			1			1	1	Covered basketball, pool, challenge course	
2 softball	√		√							
				1	vending				Golf Center	
									Partially complete	
								1	Wedding Rental	
				1			5	2	Pool/ Sport Courts/ Gym	
				1			3	1		
									Boat ramp	
17	11	2	2	36	16	4	42	24		

Budget

Funds for recreation services functions are provided by three budgets: the Park System Operating Budget, the Trust Budget, and, beginning in 2009, the Open Space Trust Fund Tax.

- The Operating Budget, part of the larger County of Monmouth Operating Budget, is primarily property tax supported. State law limits the amount by which the County can increase operating expenses each year regardless of changes in revenue. As a result of budget contraction at the County level, as of fiscal year 2009, only salaries, wages, and fringe benefits are funded by the Operating Budget.
- The Trust Budget is a special fund outside the County Operating Budget authorized by the same State law that authorizes the Board of Chosen Freeholders to appoint a Board of Recreation Commissioners (N.J.S.A. 40:12-8). According to the law, the special fund is to be “used only for the purpose of defraying the expense of improving, maintaining or policing the playgrounds and recreation places and for the other expenses of the board.” Trust Budgets are outside the state-imposed limits on budget increases, thus the Trust expenses can grow as increased demand for programs and services generates increased Trust revenue to support them. Without the fees and charges that feed the Trust Budget, the volume and breadth of Park System services would be limited to that fundable under a fixed and capped operating budget. Whereas the Trust Budget was once used almost exclusively for program-related expenses, as the County Operating Budget has been static or reduced in recent years, other operational expenses have been shifted to the Trust Budget and the Park System is now predominantly reliant on Trust revenue for basic operations, with the exception of salaries and wages.
- The Open Space Trust Fund Tax, first established in 1989, is a statutorily-authorized dedicated tax for “the acquisition of lands for County park, recreation, conservation, and farmland preservation purposes, as well as for County recreation and conservation development and maintenance purposes.” In 2009, the Board of Chosen Freeholders approved the allocation of a portion of the Fund for maintenance purposes which includes construction and maintenance materials, construction and maintenance services, equipment and vehicle maintenance repair, consultant and temporary outside services, and buildings, structures and equipment.

Funds for the construction and improvement of recreation facilities are provided by two budgets, the County Capital Budget and the Open Space Trust Fund Tax. The County Capital Budget, approved annually by the Board of Chosen Freeholders and funded by a bond ordinance, has included a \$2 to \$3 million allocation for the Park System since 1998. The Open Space Trust Fund Tax, described above, includes an annual allocation for park improvement projects, usually \$2 million.

The Fees and Charges Policy of the Monmouth County Board of Recreation Commissioners (Resolution No. R-83-5-10=204) reads in part as follows: “In order to adequately finance the acquisition, development, administration, operation and maintenance of these necessary public park and recreation areas, facilities and services, user fees and charges shall be considered to be a responsible and necessary means of supplementing tax revenues for this purpose.”

Program revenue provides vital support to the operation of the Park System and offsets budget expenses. Programmers are charged with accurately identifying all costs associated with planning and running a program so that these costs can be considered when setting the program fee, establishing enrollment minimums and maximums, and making decisions about whether to run a program with marginal enrollment.

All direct and indirect expenses are accounted for in a program’s financial profile. Direct expenses are those items that can be tracked and charged directly back to a particular program. They include instructor/leader fees, supplies, tickets, meals, busses, tolls, lodging, credit card expenses, and incidental employee reimbursements. Indirect expenses are those items which are generally not directly attributable to a particular program but are nevertheless real, incurred expenses associated with offering and running the program. They include programmer’s labor, Directory advertising, County vehicle use, postage, fliers, trip scouting, and a flat rate assessment for promotion (photography, press

releases, web, etc.). Fixed or overhead costs, such as facilities, maintenance, and support functions are not accounted for in the financial profile and are offset by net revenue.

All programs can be classified into one of the following revenue objective categories.

1. **Revenue-producing programs (Group A)** are those advertised and group programs which are priced to cover all direct and indirect expenses with a net revenue margin of 30% or more. These programs are able to provide a high profit margin while remaining a fair and competitive market value. Program price is set at the limit of what the market will bear. Examples include most sports and fitness, creative arts, self-improvement, and parent/child programs.
2. **Revenue-producing programs (Group B)** are those advertised and group programs which are designed and priced to cover all direct and indirect expenses with a net revenue margin of 6% to 29%. Examples include most nature programs.
3. **Break even programs (Group C)** are those advertised and group programs which are designed and priced to cover all direct and indirect expenses with a net revenue margin of -5% to 5%. Examples include introductory programs intended to lead to further participation and most therapeutic and recreation assistance programs.
4. **No fee programs (Group X)** are those promotional programs which are intended as a marketing tool for other programs or which provide valuable mission-related services often to large numbers of participants. Examples include drop-in and demonstration programs.

On the following page is a summary table of the Visitor Services Department budgets and total Park System budgets for the years 2014 to 2018.

Salaries and wages and fringes represent the largest expense category.

2014-2018 VISITOR SERVICES (VS) & MCPS BUDGET SUMMARY

	Salaries & Wages	Other Expenses	Trust Expense	Fringes	Total	Revenue	Excess(deficit) in Revenue
2014 (VS)	\$3,096,010.00	\$16,747.00	\$982,284.00	\$1,109,645.00	\$5,204,686.00	\$2,561,183.00	(\$2,845,600.00)
All MCPS	\$17,260,490.00	\$1,508,785.00	\$5,508,035.00	\$8,121,281.00	\$32,398,591.00	\$15,361,368.00	
2015 (VS)	\$3,192,979.00	\$9,011.00	\$1,012,086.00	\$1,089,980.00	\$5,304,056.00	\$2,661,767.00	(\$2,784,032.00)
All MCPS	\$18,279,213.00	\$1,306,080.00	\$5,466,739.00	\$8,266,685.00	\$33,318,717.00	\$16,519,359.00	
2016 (VS)	\$3,469,839.00	\$13,113.00	\$1,316,465.00	\$1,285,446.00	\$6,084,863.00	\$2,902,127.00	(\$3,182,736.00)
All MCPS	\$19,369,492.00	\$1,572,343.00	\$5,967,373.00	\$8,819,216.00	\$35,728,424.00	\$16,662,430.00	
2017 (VS)	\$3,430,941.00	\$9,403.00	\$1,339,487.00	\$1,373,957.00	\$6,153,788.00	\$2,822,738.00	(\$3,331,050.00)
All MCPS	\$19,503,717.00	\$1,468,875.00	\$6,167,072.00	\$9,448,407.00	\$36,588,071.00	\$17,392,971.00	
2018 (VS)	\$3,670,750.00	\$18,037.00	\$1,345,419.00	\$1,395,066.00	\$6,429,272.00	\$3,053,648.00	(\$3,375,624.00)
All MCPS	\$20,870,761.00	\$1,508,863.00	\$6,151,443.00	\$9,604,457.00	\$38,135,524.00	\$15,947,179.00	

ACTION PLAN

The process of developing this Recreation Services Plan has provided a valuable opportunity to assess conditions both internal and external to the Monmouth County Park System that influence choices about the recreation services to be offered over the next five years. Agency philosophy and purpose, county demographics, recreation trends, opportunities in the community, constituent interests and needs, and the human, physical, and fiscal resources of the Park System are all factors in planning for recreation services. While the process has affirmed the agency's commitment to continue the existing scope of program activities, elements and services without radical change, the 13 actions described below have been identified to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency's performance. Present fiscal realities may limit the agency's ability to grow its service to its constituents and its revenue over the horizon of this plan; however, it is important that we prepare and position ourselves for what we hope will be a brighter long-term future.

Actions will be initiated over the five-year horizon of the Recreation Services Plan in accordance with current-year implementation plans to be developed. A Recreation Services Committee chaired by the Secretary-Director will oversee the overall plan implementation with the lead responsibility for each action assigned to one of the Department Heads. At the conclusion of the five-year plan horizon, a review will determine if an amendment to the Recreation Services Plan or preparation of a new plan is warranted.

1. *Modify existing services to our customers to capitalize on opportunities for program and revenue growth identified during the recreation services planning process.*

Activity selection and the type and scope of program offerings should reflect the information regarding demographics, trends, and community opportunities and interests available in the Plan and elsewhere. Examples of activities identified as having potential for growth include the following:

- nature, outdoor adventures, gardening, and history programs for which there are few providers
- creative arts programs for which the Park System has established a successful niche
- winter sports programming supported by indoor facilities
- programming for families, organized groups, and informal groups
- programming for pre-teens and teens
- active adult programming
- pet-oriented programming

Lead Department: Visitor Services

2. *Create a committee to foster the identification and development of new initiatives which will boost park visitation and program participation while generating increased revenue.*

Appointing a committee with this responsibility reflects the growing dependence of the Park System on revenue. Greater attention must be paid to creating new sources of revenue, including programs, events, facilities and other services.

Lead Department: Assistant Director

3. *Expand the geographic reach of facilities and existing program offerings to better serve more County residents and increase revenue generation.*

The bulk of Park System programming spaces are within buildings acquired as part of land acquisition projects and adapted for public use. The distribution of these spaces is not consistent with the population distribution. Two of the major programming venues, Thompson Park and Dorbrook Recreation Area, are both in what is currently defined as Region 1. A different distribution of staff and facilities could capture additional customers. The short-term and long-term expansion of programming and self-directed recreation recommended by this plan may be accomplished by the development of new facilities or by acquiring existing facilities through purchase, donation, lease or partnerships. It may also involve the redefinition of service regions.

Lead Department: Visitor Services

4. *Prepare a new Park Development and Maintenance Plan that includes facility construction and*

improvements to support existing and expanded public programming and self-directed recreation for park visitors recommended by this plan.

The Park Development and Maintenance Plan is the Park System's long-range capital improvement plan. It includes recommendations for the maintenance and improvement of existing capital infrastructure and facilities as well as the development of new capital infrastructure and facilities. It was last updated in 2011.

Lead Department: Acquisition & Design

- 5. Continue to prepare and implement an annual Marketing Plan for the dissemination of information to the general public and the promotion of services to existing and potential customers.*

The Marketing Plan should strive to increase park visitation; promote facilities, activities and programs to build revenue; educate residents and public officials about the positive impacts of leisure services; boost agency name recognition; tap into topics of current interest to be featured in publications, exhibits, and other media; and stay up-to-date with rapid changes in technology and social media tools to capitalize on digital opportunities to communicate and interact with customers. A business-like approach to communications and marketing will be increasingly important as the Park System's dependency on program and facility revenue continues to grow. Two-way communication that fosters participant involvement in activity selection can expand the customer base and boost use of fee and free recreation services. Improved search capabilities and customized targeted promotional messages are examples of technology enhancements that could increase park visits and build revenue.

Lead Department: Visitor Services

- 6. Update the Visitor Services Programmer's Handbook to communicate the philosophy/mission of the Recreation Services Plan to all programming staff, to incorporate the Plan in the daily functioning of the staff, and to achieve consistency in procedure and practice system wide.*

The Programmer's Handbook is an internal staff resource that includes policies, procedures and other information relevant to the production and administration of Park System programs. Used by all programming staff across the agency's functional areas, it is an appropriate vehicle to communicate Plan goals and objectives and institutionalize changes to the procedures resulting from Plan actions.

Lead Department: Visitor Services

- 7. Redesign the system for collecting and reporting program and facility use statistics to better support informed decision-making regarding revenue generation and resource allocation that better serves our customers.*

The institution of a web-based program registration system since the last Recreation Services Plan offers enhanced capabilities for the collection and reporting of program and facility use statistics. This provides a good opportunity to redesign the existing reporting system. Examples of desired changes that have been identified during the planning process include the following: revising age group classifications, standardizing seasons, tracking both program source areas and interest categories, recording total program hours, and applying the same statistical reporting to both advertised and requested programs.

Lead Department: Assistant Director

- 8. Design and implement a recreation services evaluation system to include periodic scientifically valid public surveys, continuous feedback from individual and group facility users and program participants, and a process for recording, analyzing and disseminating evaluation responses.*

Responsiveness to its customers is critical to the Park System's success as both a public service agency and a revenue-making business. Involving participants in a multi-modal evaluation system will allow the Park System to make timely adjustments to its service delivery in order to meet the needs and desires of its customers, both taxpaying and fee paying.

Lead Department: Visitor Services

9. *Explore changes to traditional pricing to increase both our customer base and revenue.*
Promotions and incentives including but not limited to gift certificates, differential pricing for peak times and popular facilities, and customer reward programs should be considered to build and maintain a loyal customer base. Attention to market price trends as well as affordability and delivery costs should be considered in the pricing of services.
Lead Department: Visitor Services

10. *Work to diversify the staff and expand the customer base of program participants and park users to more closely resemble the population at large.*
The recreation services offered by the Park System must be relevant to the residents of the County. The scope, marketing, pricing and other aspects of services may need to change as the County's population becomes increasingly diverse racially and ethnically. The Park System needs to explore how other communities have adapted to serve a more diverse population.
Lead Department: Visitor Services

11. *Increase communication with and outreach to schools, municipal recreation agencies, non-profit providers, and other groups to identify possible cooperative partnerships, cross-promotion opportunities, and unmet public recreation needs that the County can serve.*
Both the Park System's resources and the leisure time of the constituents we serve are finite. Communication and cooperation with other providers can enable the total programming community to efficiently use available resources and continue to provide maximum service coverage.
Lead Department: Visitor Services

12. *Adapt the employee training program to capitalize on cost-effective offerings and invest in career development to sustain the quality of the agency's recreation services available to County residents and to prepare employees for advancement within the organization.*
A finite training budget and limitations on employee travel have resulted in fewer out-of-house training opportunities being available to staff. Adapting the training program to take advantage of increasing web-based training offerings and bringing instructors to train groups of staff in-house are two examples of ways that the level of employee training can continue to meet acceptable professional standards for a public service agency. As the Park System celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2020, it is reasonable to expect that a large number of senior employees will be retiring over the next 5-10 years. A concerted effort to prepare junior employees for career advancement within the agency will help to maintain the quality of the agency's services during this transition. All staff should be trained to promote the agency's philosophy and programs.
Lead Department: Personnel, Training & Safety

13. *Update Department and Division mission statements as necessary to reflect the philosophy/mission of the Recreation Services Plan.*
Mission statements for those Divisions involved directly and indirectly in the delivery of recreation services were last updated in 2002. In response to changes in the organization and to implement the plan actions, revisions to various mission statements are warranted. These include, but are not limited to, the Visitor Services Department, Fort Monmouth Recreation Center and Deep Cut Gardens.
Lead Department: Secretary-Director

