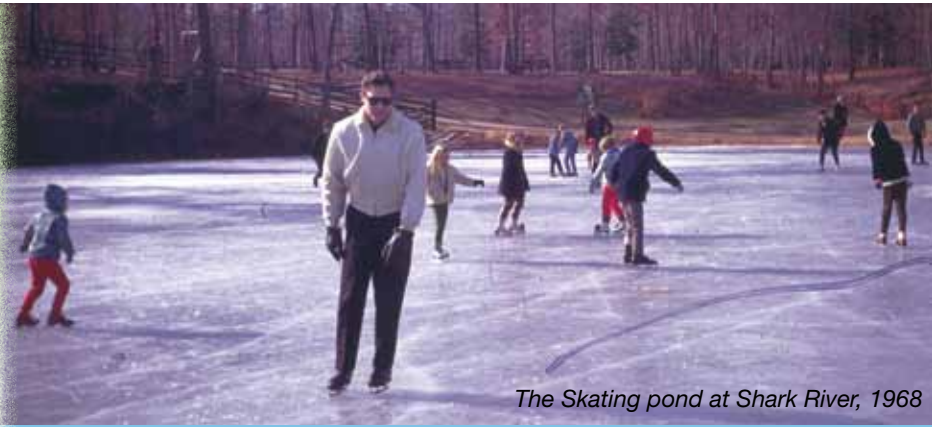


# Green Link

Monmouth County  
Park System



An Employee &  
Volunteer Newsletter  
of the Monmouth County  
Park System



*The Skating pond at Shark River, 1968*

January/February 2010

## MANATEE SITED IN COUNTY PARK

Marina staff received a BIG surprise last summer when this manatee swam into the shallow waters for a quick visit. Usually associated with warmer water temperatures like those found down south, this was the first time a manatee has been spotted (to our knowledge) at a Monmouth County Park System property. However, according to US Fish and Wildlife Service records, manatees have been seen in NJ before and are monitored by one of their offices in Florida (see box, right).



*Probably our best shot of the manatee, his size and some features are evident as he floats on his back near the docks.*

Often mistaken for a large seal or walrus, the average size of this mammal is about 800-1,200 lbs. The manatee seemed like “a slow moving, friendly type of creature,” according to Marina Manager Andy Nunes-Vais. “It was certainly different, that’s for sure.” The manatee swam around near the boats for about a 1/2 hour, then disappeared. The water temperature was very warm, about 80° F and it was low tide, no deeper than 7-8 feet of water, according to Andy.



*If you saw this swim by, would you know what it was?*



*The manatee’s face and whiskers up close, as he does what US Fish and Wildlife Service biologists warn about and catches a drink from a running hose.*

### General Information on the Manatee

*Adapted from Information Provided by the USFWS; Jacksonville, FL*

**Food and Water:** Providing wildlife with food/water is a violation of federal/state wildlife protection laws and can create significant problems. Manatees acclimate easily to hand-outs of food and fresh water and may begin viewing docks/boats as a location where food and water can be found, increasing the risk of injury/death.

**Observing Manatees:** Seeing a Florida manatee for the first time can be both an exciting and emotional experience. Please remember to always observe manatees (and other wildlife) at a distance. If you see manatees on the bottom they are likely resting or feeding. Don’t do anything to disturb them, and never ride, chase, poke or separate manatees from a group.

**Boating:** In areas where manatee sightings have been reported, slow down or even consider operating at idle speed through the area. Wear polarized sunglasses to reduce glare and make it easier to see the manatee snouts breaking the surface for a breath of air).

Using our photos, the US Fish and Wildlife Service office in Jacksonville, FL was able to identify this manatee as “Ilya,” a Florida male first documented in 1994. On this trip, Ilya had been seen in Chesapeake Bay, MD in July, the Monmouth Cove Marina in late August, and Mystic River, CT in early September.

*Continued, page 6*

# DIRECTOR'S CORNER



## "Our First 10 Years"

The germ of an idea often starts with one person and, in our case, it was the County's first Planning Director, Charles Pike. In the late 1950s, he believed it was time

for the Freeholders to create a parks and recreation agency. When the Planning Board published the County Recreation and Resorts Study and Report in 1960, it became the foundation for the Park System and drove the county's open space, parks and recreation efforts.

### The Early Days

The County's purchase of the first 24 acres of surplus lands in 1960 from the Garden State Parkway (The NJ Highway Authority) was the beginning of the Shark River Park in Wall Township. At that time, Monmouth County was still quite rural and the idea of needing a county park was not obvious to the people who grew up and lived here.



*A fishing program at Shark River Park, 1968.*

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***In 1960, Monmouth County was still quite rural and the idea of needing a county park was not obvious.***

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When we spoke of the need for public recreation facilities for example, people thought there were plenty of options such as the shore, boardwalk or a local swimming hole. Fortunately, while Shark River Park was small for a county park, it was very well attended during its first year. It was a resounding success.

Shark River Park was originally operated by County employees from other departments. The park "Foreman," Frank Magee, was from the County Road Department. Early workers George Lockett and Harold Hall came from the County Buildings and Grounds Department. Equipment was borrowed, and later inherited as "hand-me-downs" from the County. Total operating and capital expenses for the year 1960 were \$52,535. The starting salary for a park maintenance worker was \$3,300 per year. It should also be noted that you could buy a

six-cylinder, standard shift, 3-speed, step-side 1/2 ton pick-up for \$1,100.

### 1969: Almost a Decade Later

By 1969, the Park System had grown to a total of 7 areas with 2,147 acres.

There were four parks-Shark River, Holmdel, Turkey Swamp, and Thompson; a golf course at Howell Park; and two conservation areas, Baysholm and Durand Tract. The following parks were created through the generosity and action of farsighted women: Thompson Park was a gift from Mrs. Geraldine Thompson, Baysholm Conservation Area was a gift from Miss Helen Herrmann, and the Durand Tract was a gift from Mrs. Elizabeth Durand.



*An early Park System truck at Turkey Swamp Park in 1968. We eventually switched from yellow to white paint because the white was less expensive.*

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***Early parks were created by the generosity of farsighted women who donated land.***

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The Park System's total operating budget for 1969 was \$671,338, annual attendance was 406,601, and income totaled \$46,099 for the year. Here are some other statistics for 1969 that you may find interesting:

### Open Space and Parks in 1969

- 1,260,993 people had visited the Monmouth County Parks since 1961
- It cost each Monmouth County citizen \$1.62 to operate the county parks in 1969
- There were 0.006 acres of parkland for each county citizen. (Federal guidelines called for .012 acres per citizen.)
- Open space in Monmouth County was disappearing at a rate of about 2,500 acres per year.
- About 340,000 sq. ft. of ice was swept and resurfaced in the winter of 1968-1969.
- Park staff mowed the equivalent of 26,674 average size lawns.
- Park staff planted 20,350 flower bulbs and ground cover and moved 293 trees.
- Approximately 4,000 fish were stocked into the lakes and streams of the parks.



*The Park System used to host concerts at Holmdel Park in the summer. Can you see the dark shadow on the hill in the distance? The word "arboretum" was spelled out in shrubs (shown right, enlarged).*

- There were 26 acres of lakes, 37 miles of trails and 7 miles of roads maintained by park system personnel.

From a humble beginning with inherited equipment and a modest budget, we had come a long way by the end of 1969, and were looking forward to an even brighter future.

**“Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action.”**

*--Benjamin Disraeli, former British Prime Minister*

### Recreation in 1969

- 45,000 ice skaters used the ponds and lakes
- 25,932 campers, 3,892 boaters/canoists, 4,003 shelter users and 1,200 hikers used the park facilities
- Interpretive staff conducted 780 programs for 24,000 people.
- Interpretive staff walked about 900 miles as a part of the nature walks and programs.
- 15,620 man hours were needed to remove 79,600 bushels of debris and trash left behind by park visitors



*In 1968, Holmdel Park was a very popular picnic site.*



## NEWS & NOTES

**Horses for Heroes:** In 2009, the staff at Sunnyside’s Therapeutic Riding Program began working with Fort Dix on a program designed to help returning military personnel transition after service. So far, approximately 5 soldiers have been visiting our facility twice a month for instructional time with the horses to help them re-develop behaviors needed to integrate back into civilian life. According to a letter received by one participant who served four consecutive combat tours of Iraq: “I feel better around [therapy horse] ‘Blue’ than any amount of medication has made me feel...I was able to relax ...” He added, “I didn’t mind being in an open area with him, which is something that many of us returning from Iraq struggle with.” Kudos to staff for reaching out to returning soldiers with this important resource.



**New Tatum Exhibits, Part II:** A few issues back, we showed the C&R carpenters hard at work building new exhibit cases for the Red Hill Activity Center at Tatum Park. Once complete, Museum Curator Cheryl Stoeber-Goff went to work filling them with new displays on African-American History in Monmouth County. The case she is standing next to discusses the movement of free Black settlers into Matawan to work as skilled artisans in the ceramics trade. Another case (not shown) talks about one of the oldest Black newspaper publishers in Red Bank. The Heath Wing exhibits are refreshed and interesting thanks to Cheryl’s knowledge and expertise.

# ANNUAL STAFF MILESTONES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Park System's Annual Employee Recognition event in September offered a chance for staffers to socialize, learn who was celebrating a work milestone, and congratulate those who were honored for exceptional performance.

## Employee Milestones



**Celebrating 5 Years** (l to r): Liz Haenchen of the Equestrian Division at Sunnyside Recreation Area; Barbara Zarella of the Creative Arts Center at Thompson Park; Lauren Gerber of Therapeutic Recreation; Ryan Kimble of Outdoor Adventures; Chris Davino of Sports and Fitness at Dorbrook; Crosswicks Creek Ranger Pat Cardwell; Thompson Park Ranger Jim Fetter; Monmouth Cove Marina Ranger John Carey; Ilona Konstantinidis and Sue Madden of Administrative Services at Thompson Park; Mark Szemiot of Equipment Services at Thompson Park; and Manasquan Reservoir Ranger Jim Gregory. Missing from photo: Lisa Bonelli, Sam Skinner, Wayne Thielen.



**Celebrating 10 Years** (l to r): Charleston Springs Golf Superintendent Jeremy Schaefer; Matt Bezahler of Computer Operations at Thompson Park; Rachel Cohen of Cultural Services at Dorbrook; Bel Aire Golf Superintendent Gary Stedman; Jennifer Kaczala of Accounts Payable at Thompson Park; Karen Jarmusz of the Naturalist Division, and Bob Ward of Sports and Fitness at Dorbrook. Missing from photo: Michael Bernard, Sean O'Herron.



**Celebrating 15 Years** (l to r): Holmdel Principal Park Ranger Mike Dollear; Barbara Berry of Administrative Services at Thompson Park; Ruth Ann Zobel of the Naturalist Division; Charleston Springs Golf Ranger Thomas Swords. Missing from photo: Travis Bryan Vern Hasselbrock, Rick Royle, Jenn Troisi.



**Celebrating 20 Years:** Senior Park Ranger of Operations Steve Clayton. Missing from photo: Robert MacDonald.



**Celebrating 30 Years:** Crosswicks Creek Senior Park Ranger Paul Lippert.



**Celebrating 35 Years** (l to r): East Freehold Park Principal Ranger Hank Schreiber; Tatum Park Principal Ranger Skip Supczynski; Shark River Golf Course Senior Greenskeeper Jeff Wyant; Manasquan Reservoir Ranger Bob Holmes; Andy Coeyman of Land Acquisition at Thompson Park.



**Celebrating 45 Years:** Secretary-Director Jim Truncer

## Employee Achievements



**Leadership Award:** Stephanie Becker of Visitor Services for creating and managing the databases and mailing lists, and for streamlining/developing forms and manuals.



**Leadership Award:** Tim Mariner, Golf Superintendent at Hominy Hill, (right) for his ability to maintain superb conditions at the golf course, and for effectively leading his team, with General Manager of Golf Courses, Dave Pease.

Not pictured; Leadership Award: Ivan Gottstein, Manasquan Reservoir Park Ranger for his impressive work ethic, willingness to look for more challenging duties, and his ability to motivate others.



**Outstanding Customer Service Award:** Shelagh McCarthy of Visitor Services Dorbrook (right) for her ability to calmly respond to customer questions during the height of the busy season, with Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Patti Conroy (left).



**Outstanding Customer Service Award:** East Freehold Park staff who seamlessly host multiple complicated special events each year with just a minimal crew. Pictured (l to r) Assistant Superintendent of Parks George Richdale with Principal Park Ranger Hank Schreiber and Ranger John Carey.



**County Fair Spirit:** Given to the entire 2009 Fair Management Committee for their success in analyzing and "fine-tuning" all the Fair components for 2009. The award was accepted by Cultural Services Recreation Supervisor Rachel Cohen (right), pictured with Recreation Commissioner Ed Loud.

Not Pictured: Ranger Image Award: Scott Augun, Senior Park Ranger at Holmdel Park for his professional appearance and conduct, setting a good example for everyone he works with, and his excellent equipment skills.



**Innovation:** Lauren Gerber (right) Assistant Supervisor at Therapeutic Recreation for across-the-board improvements to the Park System's Inclusion Policy for individuals with disabilities, with Patti Conroy (left).



**Heroism:** The Sunnyside Equestrian Center staff for their willingness to respond at any hour and drive in any weather to medical emergencies concerning the horses in their care. Pictured (l to r) Stable Manager Cindy Ross, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Susan Liu, and Assistant Stable Manager Liz Haenchen.



**Above & Beyond:** Golf Ranger Bob Schneider (right) of Bel Aire for taking extra care of the landscape around the Pro Shop and for the energetic execution of his other duties. He is pictured with Manager of Golf Facilities, Alan Roberts (left).



**Above & Beyond:** Senior Park Naturalist Erika Bozza (left) for designing a beautiful new brochure to market group programs to schools and community groups. She is pictured here with Principal Park Naturalist Karen Jarmusz.

**Rookie of the Year:** Jed Jesiolowski (left) of Operations at the Manasquan Reservoir was recognized for his enthusiastic and energetic work style, and for consistently exceeding expectations. He is pictured here with Assistant Superintendent of Parks, Tom Fobes.



**Community Service:** Historic Preservation Specialist Gail Hunton of Planning at Thompson Park was recognized for her patience, professionalism, knowledge, attention to detail and passion in directing the rebuilding of the Visitor Center for everyone in the community to enjoy.



# NOT YOUR EVERYDAY FLORA & FAUNA

## Nature Finds a Way at Hominy Hill

This past September staff discovered this wild—that is to say, unplanned—pumpkin patch growing in one of the no-mow areas designed to encourage wildlife (it seems to be working!). According to Golf Center Manager Eric Kaplan, by the time they matured there must have been 5 or 6 “really huge” pumpkins and another bunch of giant ones.

The pumpkins were eventually picked and became part of the site’s beautiful fall displays.



*The pumpkin patch in September*

The fate of the patch remains to be seen, as the area was mowed under for the season. How did it get there in the first place? Most likely, the seeds landed there in bird droppings. (A less likely scenario is that someone—perhaps the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown—planted the seeds there.)

## Spotlight on the Regal Moth

This large, colorful caterpillar, *Citheronia regalis*, was discovered in a Black Walnut Tree by Barbara Berry of Administration; Thompson Park Senior Manager Rick Royle took the photo. What’s unusual about this big specimen, aside from its “alien-like”, nearly fluorescent green (and later, turquoise) color, are the horns on its face, no doubt leading to its other common name, the “Hickory Horned Devil.” In spite of these scary-looking protuberances, it is reportedly not harmful and quite easy to handle.



*This Hickory Horned Devil will eventually become a large, brown Regal Moth.*

## Volunteers Dig Up Unusual Fungus

This past fall, while removing the invasive grass species caryx at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, volunteers discovered a strange “blob” buried about 5-6 inches under the sand. They saved it and brought it to Park System Ecologist Ken Thoman at A&D for identification.



*The fungus, after it was first removed from the sand had a soft kind of skin, enclosing some type of “gelatinous egg-like structure.”*



*Another view of the fungus, cut open for examination, shows this dark core.*

Ken identified the specimen as the Stinkhorn fungus, given this common name because of its unpleasant smell (which attracts flies, an important vector). It is just one of a few common mushrooms found in the sand. After identification, the fungus kept growing in the plastic bag it was stored in and started to take on the form of its fruiting body (shown below) from which



*The Stinkhorn fungus fruiting body, shown intact (right) and in cross section (left).*

the species gets its scientific name—*Phallus hadriani*.

## Welcome, New Hires!

**Ralph Apicelli**, County Park Ranger  
Hartshorne Woods, 10/5/09

**Tom Vicari**, Mechanic/Welder-Equipment  
Services, Thompson Park, 11/9/09

**Katie Stone**, Recreation Leader,  
Creative Arts-Thompson Park, 11/9/09

**Barbara Reeves**, Naturalist-  
Huber Woods Park, 11/9/09

*Manatee Sited... continued*

Unfortunately, Ilya did not return south before the water got cold and his story continued in October with news (Asbury Park Press website, October 16, 2009, [www.app.com](http://www.app.com)) that he was stranded near an outfall pipe at a refinery in Linden, seeking warm water. Marine Mammal Rescue began tracking him, but a Nor’easter rolled in over that weekend and by the following Monday it was reported (Star Ledger website, October 19, 2009, [www.nj.com](http://www.nj.com)) that the rescuers had “lost sight” of Ilya, and were hoping he was heading south on his own. Ultimately, he was found, brought to the Marine Mammal Stranding Center in Brigantine to recuperate, then air lifted to a Coast Guard Station in Miami. (October 29, 2009 [www.app.com](http://www.app.com)).





*"Give Golf a Swing" Spring 2009; Alan Roberts; John Gubernat and Carol Hobbs from Pine Brook GC*



*"Farmland Preservation" Fall 2009; Lisa Bonelli, of Public Information & Joe Reynolds, Naturalist*

## COULD THE NEXT EXHIBIT AT HOLMDEL PARK BE DESIGNED BY YOU?

Each October, Exhibit Team Coordinator Faith Hahn solicits exhibit case ideas from anyone in the Park System with an email address. The replies are narrowed down to 4 per year. Those completed in 2009, are shown here. If you have been sitting on a good exhibit case idea, why not consider submitting it next round?

Many staffers-but not all-who suggest exhibit case ideas go on to design and install the exhibit themselves. It depends on whether you have the time and capacity and if you don't, a team can be assigned. For those who want to construct their own exhibit, the Exhibit Team can help you figure out how to get it done, and staff at Graphics (with occasional help from carpenters at C&R) can help build the needed elements.



*"Channel Your Energy Outside" Winter 2009; Karen Jarmusz & Naturalists from Huber Woods*



*"Play for All" Summer 2009; Rich Pillar & Anna Luiten from A&D*