

Green Link

Monmouth County
Park System



An Employee &
Volunteer Newsletter
of the Monmouth County
Park System



Holmdel Park

November/December 2010

WHAT'S GOING ON AT OUR UNDEVELOPED PARKS?

You may not hear much about these properties, but improvements are now underway at a few sites. Not sure where they are? Check them out in the Parks Guide map, or online at www.monmouthcountyparks.com. Here is some background and a run-down of recent activities to get you started:



Baysholm Tract.

Baysholm Tract is located just down the street from Hominy Hill Golf Course in Freehold. This 71 acre family farm was gifted to the Park System from Helen Hermann in two parcels in 1969 and 1973. The site is mostly agricultural fields; visitors call walk mowed field edges. The site also contains a park maintenance area for East Freehold Showgrounds. Status: unchanged.



DeBois Creek.

DeBois Creek Recreation Area. Named after the creek that runs through it, the Park System purchased the first 109 acres of this Freehold site (near East Freehold Showgrounds) in 1998, and added another 30 acres in 2009. The flat grassland will make good soccer fields, and the plan is to develop the park for active recreation (like Dorbrook). In the meantime...a temporary "shared" parking lot is in the works for the new County Prosecutor's Office building, which will be located around the corner, and may encourage visitation to the site.



Yellow Brook Tract.

Yellow Brook Tract. The first 225 acres in Howell were purchased in 2000 (the site is now 335 acres) as a wetland, woodland and wildlife habitat with the possibility for future trails. Like many of our properties, the purchase was made possible with Green Acres funding. It is located by Rt. 33 across from the county Fire Academy (near The Cabin). Status: unchanged.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“LOOKING AHEAD”

I was recently asked what I see the Park System accomplishing in future years. As you probably know, I think we have been extremely lucky over the past 50 years in accomplishing all that we have. I recently read that luck is the result of being prepared and being able to respond to an opportunity.

Both our Open Space Plan and our Recreation Services Plan anticipate the county's continued development and the need to preserve open space while the land is available, and to provide the necessary park and recreation services. What we must be aware of and responsive to are the changing economic conditions, the changing cultural makeup, and the changing interests of those we serve.

We need to stay responsive to changing economic and cultural conditions, and to the changing interests of those we serve.



In addition, we have a duty to educate our citizens about the natural world we are part of and its importance to our physical and mental well-being.

Now in our second year of sailboat rentals at the Manasquan Reservoir (an activity that augments the beginner sailing programs and camps we offer) we continue efforts to

meet the public's growing interest in this outdoor activity.

In moving forward, we will need to continue to:

- preserve open space for park, recreation, and conservation;
- provide opportunities for our children and grandchildren to develop physically and mentally as part of a healthy and productive society;
- provide recreation services and opportunities within 20 minutes of every county citizen;
- connect our park and open space areas with greenways and trails; and
- create stream valley greenways for the protection of our water supply.

I believe our future will, to a large extent, be influenced by our ability to:

- set benchmarks for the quality of facilities and services we provide;
- preserve natural and cultural resources of county significance;
- create a sense of place and community;
- become a part of the fabric of our communities;
- be efficient and effective in carrying out our mission;
- monitor operating costs and develop strategies to meet changing economic conditions;
- respond to changing county demographics;
- tell our public the story of what we do;
- obtain public support; and
- maintain credibility with those we serve.

Did You Know? After just a year with a **facebook** account, the Park System already has almost 2,500 “friends.” It's just another way of reaching out to let people know what's going on in the parks.

The investments we make going forward will create a Park System that will:

- help shape our communities;
- protect and enhance property values;
- contribute to the quality of life;
- make our communities attractive places where people will want to live, work and locate their businesses;
- protect our water supply; and most importantly,
- preserve wildlife and plant habitats to protect diverse flora and fauna.

When you think about it, the key to the future of our organization is directly linked to the welfare of our grandchildren and the environment we will be leaving them. It has been said that our business, in a few words and in the simplest of terms, is about “children and trees.”

“Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

--Warren Buffet



The Henry Hudson Trail through Big Brook.



The fields of Big Brook Park.

Big Brook Park. The Park System purchased this 379-acre farm from the state in 1997; it was surplus land from the closing of Marlboro Psychiatric Hospital which was located across the street (Route 520). A portion of the Henry Hudson Trail is currently adjacent to this site and the gravel parking lot will soon be improved and opened to provide visitors with easier access to the park's meadows and woodlands. The fields are great for birding.

Metedeconk River Greenway. The Park System purchased its first 2-acre parcel along the river separating Monmouth and Ocean counties in 2000 to preserve this important waterway. The headwaters of the Metedeconk River stem from Turkey Swamp Park and are a source of drinking water. This greenway is now 200+ acres. Status: growing as parcels become available but no parking access and otherwise unchanged. (no photos yet!)



View of the former Marlboro Airport next to the Henry Hudson Trail crossing. The runways, mostly overgrown, are located in the fields behind the trail.

Union Transportation Trail. This property was recently removed from "undeveloped" category with the opening of the first 1.8 miles of gravel-surface trail and two access parking lots on September 25 (more about that in the next issue!)

An Unusual Feature...

Located right next to our **Big Brook** property is this state-managed burial site for former Marlboro Hospital residents. The graveyard markers are numbered, and a "key" with their names and date of passing



is located on the rim of this circular stone sitting area buffered by trees.



The recently opened UTT.

Corner

Volunteer

Spotlight On...

We were going to list all the areas where this volunteer devoted time through the years...and



realized it would be easier to list the areas he hasn't!!! For his amazing dedication (over 2,000 hours and many park awards) the Green Link wishes to shine this month's spotlight on volunteer and friend, **Harden Fowler** of Tinton Falls.



Playing in the Parks. Urban Recreation staffers held their annual Coastal Activity Center (CAC) picnic in Shark River Park for the first time this year. Formerly, it was held in the CAC parking lot in Asbury Park. Many participants commented that they had been to this park before with family and friends, so the venue was a comfortable one. Each summer, this division also holds one of their annual concerts at Shark River as well.



Children and program leaders from the CAC huddle up for outdoor activities on the field, before their picnic at Shark River this past June.



Urban Rec campers enjoy their summer concert at Shark River.

Follow Up to the FFA. Last issue, we saw our park golf staff receive recognition from the Future Farmers of America and Monmouth County Vocational School for their work on the “FFA Links” golf hole they helped students construct in Freehold. Check out their handiwork...



Built by vocational students with some instructional help and support from park staff, this forward bunker made for a lovely “outdoor classroom.”

Golf Courses Celebrate 50th With Putting Challenge. In mid June, area golfers “putt” their best foot forward in a challenge to their talents at each of our six courses. The winner from each course was



then invited to a final Putt-Off, held at Howell Park Golf Course in August.

Golfers at Shark River test their skills in the Park System’s 50th Anniversary Putting Challenge held last June.



The overall winner of the Final Putt-Off (by just one stroke) is Bruce Ambler (center) of Middletown, representing Shark River GC. The other golfers who competed are (l to r) David Aucoin of Belford, the putting champion from Hominy Hill GC, Bobby Mander of Holmdel, from Bel Aire GC, Russ Kohlmann of Manalapan from Pine Brook GC, and Connor Birch of Wall from Howell Park GC. Missing from photo: Ken Gerard of Neptune, the putting champ from Charleston Springs GC

Will Gail Hunton Leave the Park System for a Career in TV? We hope not, but she did agree to this interview for a webisode on the county TV show, Monmouth In Focus, now airing online. Gail is the Park System’s Historical Preservation Specialist and she



Gail “stars” on Monmouth In Focus, the county’s web-based TV series.

discussed the reconstruction of the Thompson Park Visitor Center as part of a 3-part series on the Park System’s 50th Anniversary. Previous episodes were

also taped with Director Jim Truncer and Assistant Director Bruce Gollnick. View them all online at www.monmouth.nj.us. (News Room, click “videos”)

Best Maintained Town Park. Looks like we have some more competition for park quality from a local site. Rumson's Riverside Park won this year's Ross W. Maghan Award for Exemplary Park Maintenance from the Freeholders and Board of Recreation Commissioners at the Annual Park and Recreation Achievement Awards, distributed to municipalities each summer. This year's Volunteer Award went to Verita and Doug Hill of Neptune's Pop Warner Program, the Victor Grossinger Award for Programming honored the Rumson Crew Program, and the Charles M. Pike Award for Outstanding Recreational Facility was given to Keyport's Waterfront Park.



Freeholder Director Lillian Burry (far left) and Board of Recreation Commissioners Chair Ed Loud (far right) give Rumson representatives (center left) Councilman Frank Shanley and (center right) Borough Administrator Tom Rodgers their recognition plaque and perhaps more importantly, the park sign that recognizes the award.



Mike Davenport gives a presentation on wildlife "hot spots" in Monmouth County, many of which are in or near the county parks.

Greentable Meets on Wildlife "Hot Spots." Representatives from local open space and environmental organizations gathered this summer at MREC to hear a "Watchable Wildlife" presentation by Mike Davenport of the

Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ. He's a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and marine species specialist, and his job is to gather data from multiple sources—including the public—to map NJ's wildlife "hot spots." Not surprisingly, many are found at or in park properties near bodies of water such as the Shark and Navesink Rivers, Raritan Bay and Atlantic Beaches. Some of this information is now available on the state's DEP website.



(l to r) Camp Coordinator Dave Roche, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation Patti Conroy and Recreation Supervisor of Cultural Services (who sponsored this event) Rachel Cohen at the June Flea market.

Green Programs Take Off. Staff from two different Visitor Service areas launched successful green programs this past summer. First up, the *Eco-Elephant Family Flea Market* was held twice at Dorbrook this past summer (June 26th and August 28th) to encourage people to "recycle" items they don't need anymore. Unwanted "stuff" was collect county-wide and raised money for the Friends of the Parks—the response was HUGE. Special thanks to all who participated!



Land-fill Alternative! The Eco-Elephant Family Flea Market is a recycling success.



Campers are stylin' in t-shirts they designed themselves with an eco-friendly theme in mind.



Participants in the Eco-Friendly Fashion Camp take a bow after modeling outfits they created from recycled vintage finds.

An *Eco-Friendly Fashion Show* camp was also held this past summer by Naturalists, featuring items of recycled clothing and accessories put together from vintage and thrift shop finds, as well as jewelry made from nature (think shells and seasoned sea glass).

Did You Notice How Dry it was Last Summer? Staff Photographer Maribeth Gardner did, and caught these photos of unusually low water levels at the Manasquan Reservoir.



The rocks along Georgia Tavern Rd.



The kayak launch area near the Visitor Center.

FAIR WRAP-UP

You might think with all that crazy heat, no one would have felt like being anywhere near food—but that wasn't the case.

Here's what the cake looked like before it was devoured. Donated by Whole Foods, it was part of a decorating activity sponsored to celebrate our 50th Anniversary.



Fair Co-Chair and Chair, Rachel Cohen and Rick Royle, wrestle over a piece of our 50th Anniversary cake.



VC front desk receptionist Jean Kline babysits the pies before the pie-eating contest on Sunday, which was crowded with participants as usual.

Here, other staffers show their endurance by staying upbeat in the high temperatures:



Recreation Supervisor Beverly Miller of Outdoor Adventures awaits visitors who will challenge themselves on the portable climbing wall.



Charlie Todd of Deep Cut Gardens tends to the Home & Garden Tent. Did you know? This is the largest tent at the Fair.



Assistant Naturalists Katie Nolan and Peggy Ross work the Park System exhibit tent.



This year's exhibit featured the first 50 years of park history. It was expertly and creatively designed by Naturalist Barbara Reeves, and featured plenty of hands-on activities—including a mini putting green AND live chickens!

Check out the 50th Anniversary logo on the hood of this car on Motor Sports Night, and Ryan Kimble of Outdoor Adventures (seated, left), Supervising Naturalist Ruth Ann Zobel (left), and Fair Chair Rick Royle.



The two Frans. Park Planner Fran Martone (left) and Purchasing Agent Fran Lorelli (who recently replaced retiree Bobby Cain) stop to sip some water under a shady tree.

How hot was it? We ran out of our supply of bottled water on the third day of the Fair, and Friends of the Parks Director Maria Wojciechowski worked with the generous people at Wegmans



to secure an extra 150 cases (which they took right off their shelves for us at the last minute). In

total, they donated 300 cases of water. And for visitors, misting stations were set up around the park to cool off.



Mr. Technology Matt Bezahler, our Computer Services Tech, with a phone in one hand and what else but a computer cable in the other.



Seasonal and Cultural Services staff were on strolling entertainment duty (l to r) Jess Martin, Kristen Gilmore, Allison Kowalski, Brian Martin, Rich Savner (purple hoopla), in the middle, Ann Sage of Cultural Services, Bryan Borut (tall pink hoopla), Claire Gavin, Alex Janiw, and Jill DeMatteo.



Fair visitors took full advantage of the misting stations, set up around the park on Saturday and Sunday, to cool off. Look closely and you will see Senior Electrician Mike Vaccaro and C&R Supervisor Bob Brannan in the background fixing a torn banner.

The Park System Marketing team tried out some new advertising for the Fair this year. Maybe you noticed the Facebook trivia contest, blinking traffic signs along a few local highways, or the airplane banner flyover at the beach? There were also some special Fair features for our 50th anniversary.



The Fair was advertised in the air this year.



These Ranger picture-posers were constructed by the staff at Graphics. They were SO popular with visitors that one of them was eventually "retired" from over-use! They are holding signs that direct visitors to find the 50 Fun Park Facts signs places that the Fairgrounds.



November

- 1 Ivan Gottstein
- 2 Frank Bradford
- 3 Rich Pillar • Paul C. Zimmer
- 4 Susan Liu
- 5 Fran Lorelli
- 11 Bill Diehl • Tony Eng
- Mark Miller • Jim Truncer
- 16 Paul Basquill • Faith Hahn
- 17 Patrick Cardwell
- 18 James F. Foligno, Jr. • Jed Jesiolowski
- 19 Daniel Buecher • Mark Foulks
- John Wallace
- 21 Christina Miller • Bob Petrow
- 23 Mike Dollear
- 24 Ann Marie Osnato
- 25 Philip Patterson
- 26 Tom Ketcham • Keith York

December

- 6 Alejandro Roman
- 7 Marcia Floden
- 8 Darrin Morrissey • Alan Roberts
- 11 Marcus Novak
- 12 Mary Naughton
- 13 Joe Sardonía • Pete Waters
- 15 Dolores DeMaria • Andrew Spears
- 16 Tanya Dinova • Rich Meister
- 17 Stephanie Becker • Jeff Semanchick
- 18 Tim Parkans
- 19 Don Sadowski
- 22 Ilona Szabo de Bucs
- 23 Justin Dunn
- 24 Ken Olsen
- 26 Susan Baranowski • Eric Testa
- 27 Joshua Storch
- 29 Sarah Bent • Kevin Dunn
- 31 Scott Augun • Sam Camuso

January

- 4 Mary Mautner • Jen Nixon
- 5 Diane Elwood • Tom Swords
- 6 Valerie Ferris
- 9 Pat Cernak • Joe Smith
- 12 Alvin Lopez • Beverly Miller
- Jerry Ostrander
- 13 Marvin Britten
- 14 Andrew Wehmann
- 15 Bob Melick
- 16 Kathleen Ferraro • Paul McCue
- 17 Greg Shannon
- 18 Patrick W. Becker
- 19 John Caddock
- 20 Russ Anderson • Courtney Bison
- 22 Steve Moraghan
- 23 Jan Galanti
- 25 Shelagh A. McCarthy
- 26 Brad Roe • Gregg Wolff
- 27 John Schanck
- 28 Rachel Cohen
- 29 Lisa Horner
- 30 James Januszkiewicz • Dave Pease
- Carol Stasik
- 31 Bob Schneider

Green Link, A bimonthly newsletter for employees and volunteers of the Monmouth County Park System.

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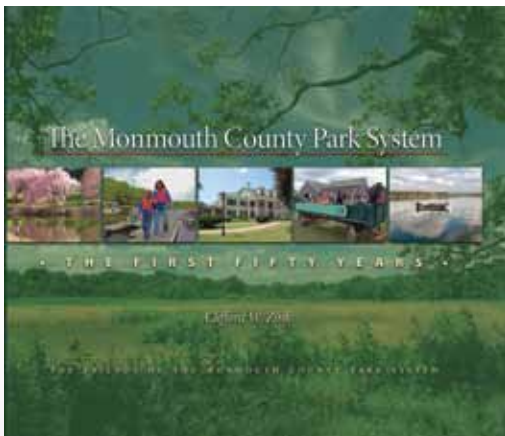
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PRSR STD
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PARK SYSTEM

Indoor/Outdoor



Have you ordered your own copy of *The Monmouth County Park System: The First Fifty Years*? The Friends of the Parks is offering this beautiful coffee table book to employees at a discounted rate of \$30 – a savings of \$10. The books are for sale at the Friends Office, Park System Headquarters and Visitor Center—all in Thompson Park. Please call the Friends at 732-975-9735 or visit online www.friendsofmonmouthcountyparks.com for more info.



Manager of Personnel, Safety and Training Nancy Borchert captured this nest of baby birds in the courtyard of the HQ building last spring.



This wild turkey struts his stuff at Hartshorne Woods. Note the anatomical difference between this bird, and the ones we will be serving up on our tables at the end of the month.

If you have a fun photo of wildlife, staff (or whatever!) in the parks, why not share it with fellow employees?
Email the Green Link at Ibonelli@monmouthcountyparks.com.