



Green Link

An Employee & Volunteer Newsletter
of the Monmouth County Park System



Manasquan Reservoir

July/August 2013

Meet The 28th Graduating Class Of Park Rangers

On April 3, 2013, the Park System welcomed eleven new rangers into the parks, and this year's graduating class received many compliments. They were commended for their demeanor and discipline from Police Academy staff where they received law enforcement training, and also our own training staff for their exceptional academic performance (class average of 96!). Our newest rangers have already been assigned to their parks.

Of the 11 new recruits, seven were seasonal employees before joining our full-time staff, and three come to us with prior or current military service: Tom Sheehan (USAF Reserve), Jason Zinger (USMC Reserve), and Michael Sullivan (USMC Veteran).

The two rangers singled out for their personal academic achievements were Golden Oak Recipient Jason Zinger who had the highest class average, and Silver Oak Recipient Jenna Pesano who had the second highest average. Both rangers spoke at the ceremony.

A few highlights from this years training included a Search & Rescue operation that was so well planned and realistic that it made a few Thompson Park administrative staffers nervous because the radio-chatter and park activity were so convincing. There were also some lighter moments in class and at graduation, when the rangers could relax (and hopefully appreciate) some of the unique work they will be performing.



(standing, l to r) **Ivan Sanchez**, Operations/Special Projects; **Christopher DeMaio**, Hartshorne Woods; **Thomas Sheehan**, Bayshore Waterfront; **Robert Smith**, Dorbrook; **Jason Zinger**, Golden Oak Recipient, Manasquan Reservoir; and **Francisco Masini**, Turkey Swamp. (seated, l to r) **Justin Birk**, Deep Cut; **James Curry**, Thompson Park; **David Loilche**, Crosswicks Creek; **Jenna Pesano**, Silver Oak Recipient, Holmdel; and **Michael Sullivan**, Turkey Swamp.



After graduating top of his class, Golden Oak Recipient **Jason Zinger** enjoyed some dinner with his daughter.



Silver Oak Recipient **Jenna Pesano** spoke about how she was born the same year the Manasquan Reservoir opened, grew up in Howell, and enjoyed the many county parks throughout her childhood. She has now come full circle and looks forward to serving in the parks where she once played.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“UNEXPECTED KINDNESS”

Our image depends upon our doing a number of things right, this I believe is true whether it is how we do our life's work or live our personal

lives. Our department tells others a lot about us. The positive impression we make on our customers is one of our best forms of advertising.

My wife and I had the unfortunate experience this past December of hitting a deer with our car that, in turn, required some auto body work. As is often the case, there was nothing that could have been done for the deer as she had failed to look both ways before crossing Rt. 524, less than a mile from our home, in Allentown.

The positive impression we make on our customers is one of our best forms of advertising.

The auto body shop I use is, in my opinion, one of the very best, and I will willingly tell you so. Why would I say this? It is because they do a great job in making repairs; they do the work for the amount of the insurance estimate; and the owner explains in detail each step of what needs to be done, how they are going to do the work, how long it will take, and when the car will be ready to be picked up. They then call and remind you when the car is to be dropped off, and call again when the car is ready to be picked up.

When I picked up the car, the shop owner reviewed the work that had been done as we walked around the vehicle, which had also been thoroughly cleaned inside and out. The shop owner also made sure to say that if I experienced anything I thought was not right, to be sure to give him a call. Then, guess what - a week later we got a thank you card in the mail with a personal note thanking us for our business.

This unexpected kindness and personalized attention can't help but impress the customers of this business, and if you should ever have occasion to need an auto body shop that does outstanding work, just ask me.

“I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took any excuse.”

—*Florence Nightingale, British Social Reformer, Nurse, and Statistician*



*Courtesy is one way we can help ensure park visitors have a great experience with us, shown above by Turkey Swamp Park Ranger **Mike Towle** at Outdoor Expo. Another is enthusiasm, demonstrated by seasonal employees **Dave Roche** and **Tracy Shiffman**. Shown below leading an archery program, for Outdoor Adventures both also work across park departments.*



Weddings, Anyone?



There is no more beautiful backdrop against wedding white than the lush green Visitor Center lawn at Thompson Park. This wedding ceremony occurred outside, but the wedding party also took advantage of the beautiful Visitor Center for preparation.



In 2012, the Park System hosted 23 weddings, mostly at **Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park**, up from 15 wedding ceremonies in 2011. The parks also hosted 86 wedding photo shoots, mostly at **Deep Cut Gardens**, the Park System's most popular site for wedding photos.

To highlight and celebrate this growing new opportunity, **Helen Fiore of Operations** created this display. She is also the Park System contact, if you know anyone who would like to get married in the parks.



Advertising our wedding facilities at the Holmdel Park shelter building display.

Staff On-Site At Fort Monmouth Recreation Center (FMRC)

This past April, the Park System staff began moving their belongings over to **Fort Monmouth Recreation Center**. The first few visits had staff 'diving in' (figuratively speaking, the outdoor pools are not open yet) to a very well-stocked facility to assess the equipment and begin setting up shop. Staff are planning a fully array of recreation programs for the fall.



*"Welcome to the FMRC," Asst. Superintendent of Recreation **Karen Jarmusz** demonstrates her reception skills at the Front Desk.*



*Asst. Rec Supervisor **Jenn Troisi** and Rec Supervisor **Bob Ward** of Sports and Fitness check out the 5,700 sq. ft. foot gym. For Jen and Bob, this will be their new 'office' as well, as they are moving to this site.*



While recreation staff check out the inside, operations staff got to work on the grounds led by Assistant Park Superintendent George Richdale and Senior Ranger Andy Spears. So far, they have removed these two sheds and began mowing, clearing and trimming (much needed after a 2 year vacancy).



*Coordinator of Volunteers **Melissa Kelly** checks out some of the equipment, in this case one of her favorite gym activities, the scooter.*



From high to low, the trails team clears branches and vines for a new trail at Crosswicks Creek (l to r) **Sandy Gaum, Victoria Gercher, Gary Shrunk, Renee Low and Mandy Hintelman.**

Volunteers Are Taming Our Rugged Terrain

Spring started with our volunteers hitting up some of our more rustic sites to get some trail work done. In March, they tackled the **Crosswicks Creek Greenway** to carve out a 0.6 mile section of the new Deep Run Trail from the southernmost tip of the park, heading north. One of the Park System's newer sites, this is the first visit from the Trails Team. This park only recently opened to the public (within the last few years) and remains mostly undeveloped, save for farm trails and informal paths made and used by local equestrians.

Then, in April, the volunteers visited **Hartshorne Woods**, one of our more heavily wooded sites. Often used by bicyclists, the trails crew performed general maintenance on the Rocky Point and Grand Tour trails, and worked specifically to reconfigure the tread so it sheds water on one steep incline and switchback area.



Park Manager **Bill O'Shaunessy** (right) works with volunteer **Michael Wojciechowski** (left).



(l to r) Volunteers **Loma Gault, Harden Fowler, Janice Beeby and Eleanor Brossoie** at Hartshorne Woods.



(l to r) **Daniel Hart, Victoria Gercher, Pat McFadden, Bill Anderson and Bob Feldman.**

Program Notes: Spring Costumes & Colors

We had a very late spring this year, and the cool temperatures may have kept some of us inside. But a special park event or activity provided good reason for an afternoon outdoors.



Egg Quest for kids was a fun and festive egg 'hunt' at Thompson Park. Of course, no egg hunt is complete without some rabbits, of which there were 3 separate kinds! Inflatable, just because its fun. Costumed, for a bunny photo op...or should we say photo hop? Both are pictured left with staffers, Recreation Supervisor **Courtney Bison** and Volunteer **Alex Osnato**. There was also a real rabbit (right) brought by Urban Recreation Pet Program Leader **Greg Eiseman**.



If rabbits and eggs are not your thing, then maybe playing under a parachute might be. This colorful activity made the rounds this past spring at programs throughout the parks.



Spring Break kicked off with a Superheroes in Training Camp, led by seasonal **Robin Ware** and Recreation Leader **Allison Gibney**, both having fun on the parachute in Thompson Park.



Then, the parachute moved on to celebrate spring at **Walnford's Bluebell Festival**, alongside a dozen more activities such as the climbing wall (also pictured), Frisbee golf, old-fashioned games and music—enjoyed by adults and children.

Golf Course Happenings

Staff kept busy opening a few weeks early for the 2013 season, one golf ranger was moved to compose poetry (in his time off, of course), and a well-known athlete stops by for a visit.

A Day in the Life at “The Shark”

By Edward J. Zirpola, Seasonal Golf Ranger



Sunset over Shark River GC

*We get up in the dark,
We arrive at “The Shark.”*

*Golf carts must be moved and flags are raised.
Doors are opened and “The Shark” is ready for play.*

*Golfers check in and pay their fee.
Cliffie makes sure they’re on the first tee.
The sun starts to shine in the east.
Golfers complain, “Hole number one is a beast!”*

*Singles arrive with no tee time.
Their names are listed in line.
Faces are happy and full of cheer.
The nine o’clock tee time is near.*

*So many golfers on a sunny, spring day
You just have to enjoy the way that they play.
One after another they challenge “The Shark.”
But sooner or later, they all lose their ‘bark.’*

*As the sun begins to set in the west.
We know the golfers will give it their best.
The last four holes are as hard as they come.
After bogies and pars and a few birdies, they are done.*

*When we leave for the day, again it is dark.
The deer and the foxes now come out at “The Shark.”
Flags are lowered, carts are rinsed and put away.
Doors must be closed and
“The Shark” is done...until the next day.*



Shark River Has its Own Flag! Here are the winners from an early spring tournament, the Wall HS Invitational: 1st place Tom Burns from St. Rose HS; 2nd place Dawson Jones from Howell HS, and the low score school team winners from Rumson-Fair Haven HS (who held up the flag).



*Guess Who Stopped By?
NY Knicks guard J.R. Smith visited **Charleston Springs** driving range last year. Staff were reminded of this photo when Mr. Smith was given the Sixth Man Award in April, and sent it along to the Green Link. By the way, this award is given to the team’s MVP coming off the bench as a substitute (or sixth man).*

Ranger Graduation...continued



Training Coordinator **Travis Bryan** (center) addresses the ranger class prior to graduation at Hominy Hill. Once a Ranger himself, he knows what the class can expect, both at graduation and out in the field.

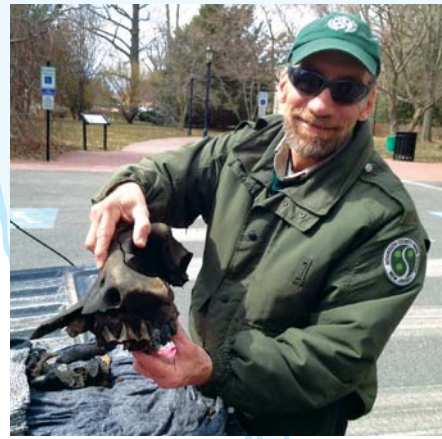


During classroom training, Ranger **Jim Curry** received a very personal demonstration on local wildlife—in this case, a corn snake—from Asst. Superintendent of Recreation **Karen Jarmusz**.

Infant Mastodon Skull Discovered Near Park

This past March, a partial 'baby' mastodon skull dating from the Ice Age was found in Ramanessin Creek (not on park property, but nearby). The person who discovered the fragment brought it over to our own paleontologist and **Thompson Park Ranger Ralph Johnson** for identification. According to Ralph, the find is very significant because the skull is from an infant.

As if March wasn't exciting enough for Ralph with this fossil find, he was named the recipient of the 2013 Katherine Palmer award, presented by the Paleontological Research Institute (PRI). This award recognizes individuals who are avocational paleontologists for their contributions to the field. He was nominated by Drs. Carl Mehling and John Pojeta, and recommended as this year's awardee by the Science Committee of the PRI Board of Trustees from among a very competitive slate of candidates. Congratulations Ralph!



*The skull fragments were brought right over to **Park Ranger Ralph Johnson**, who was able to confirm the identification. He also explained that the bone is permeated with iron compounds from the soil in which it was buried, which rust and give it this orange - brown color.*

The fragment is from the Pleistocene Epoch, the end of Ice Age, about 10,000 to 50,000 thousand years ago. The mastodon, sometimes affectionately described by experts as a 'hairy elephant,' lived long after the dinosaurs. It was somewhat related to the woolly mammoth, and was well adapted to cold weather. It is possible mastodons were roaming the earth at the same time as human beings (paleo-Indians). In terms of their disappearance, one theory is that mastodons were hunted to extinction; another is that climate change (end of the Ice Age) killed them.

CONSTRUCTION NEWS & NOTES



After an extensive upgrade and renovation, the original homestead at Sunnyside re-opened this past spring as program and office space. The new **Sunnyside Activity Center**, as it is now called, received upgrades for code and safety, while also preserving many of the home's lovely and unique architectural features. Take a look...



Etched Glass Logo at the front reception area. Not a historic feature, of course, but it is a Park System first as far as we can tell.



Variable Floor Colors. These serve as "detectable warning" to individuals traveling along this hall with gradations. The grades were needed to match different floor levels in different parts of the house, and the color changes are an ADA requirement.



Wood Details. These real wood ceiling beams run the length of the original portions of the house and date back to the early 1800s. They were given a warm, classic wood finish with Tung Oil. The ornate pine paneling in this Program Room was given the same beautiful finish. Check out the built-in, arched bookcase—you don't see too many of those anymore!



Recessed Seating. This charming little nook was formed when the walls were bumped out to accommodate new HVAC systems. By the way, that molding was salvaged from other parts of the house.



'Popcorn' Floor Treatment. Painted wood floors were common in the past. Perhaps this original paint pattern, preserved and covered with urethane, was meant to look like marble?

In Other Icy News...

Considering we really didn't have all that much snow last winter, it is a little surprising that the Green Link still has so many snow-related photos. Perhaps taking a look will help us all remember it wasn't that long ago when we were shivering and waiting for spring...



Cool Coyote. Here's a coyote trotting through the snow on property near **Turkey Swamp Park** in 2011. Since then, that property was acquired by the Park System, and so perhaps also was the coyote. Many people are unfamiliar with coyote and may mistake them for fox. Here they are side by side for comparison. Note that the coloring and puffy tail are similar, but the fox is much smaller and has more delicate, almost feline features.



Cold Weather Enthusiast. People who know outdoor adventurer and **Dorbrook Principal Park Ranger Mary Mautner** know she isn't afraid

of the cold and will ski and camp out all winter long. What they may not know, however, is that she apparently isn't afraid of an avalanche either--although the risk was low the day this photo was taken at White Mountain National Forest in NH. Imagine if our staff had to track and post the risk from an avalanche.



Exterior Features. The lamp-post lit sidewalk leads to a 'pop' of color at the red-roof porch entrance area, flanked by beautiful windows and doors of the sunrooms on either side (restored to match originals).

Special thanks to Chief Landscape Architect **Andy North** for providing details about the project, and 'Assignment Photographer' **Claire Morris** who graciously provided feature photos to complement the regular project photos taken by Construction Inspectors **John Eisemann** and **Steve Matthews**.



Farewell, Retirees! June 1, 2013

Ruth Ann Zobel—Naturalist, MREC

Janet Ryan—Naturalist, HPAC

Terry Grewen—Land Acquisition, A&D

Welcome New Hires!

Richard Porbansky - Mechanical Repairer
Light Equipment, April 29, 2013

Elizabeth (Liz) Hennessy - Recreation
Leader, Urban Recreation, May 6, 2013

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

July

2 Travis Bryan 2 Jason Miller 3 William Vega 5 Anthony Ribera
6 Richard Brunelli 6 Thomas Osborne 6 Charlie Todd
8 Brian Corrigan 8 Bryan Whalen 9 Chris Plantamura
10 Keith Bennett 10 Glenn Miller 13 Dennis Janwich
13 David Loichle 14 William Bellingham 14 Paul DeJesus
21 Larry Cunningham 21 Donna Dugo 21 Barbara Reeves
23 Kerry McKenna 24 Anna Luiten 24 Mike Vaccaro
27 Bill O'Shaughnessy 30 Harold Ayers 30 Pat Douglas
30 Paul Lippert 30 Ryan Ponnwitz 31 Jose Bruno

August

1 Peggy Eschbach 5 Eric Kaplan 6 Frank Biddle
6 Jim Gregory 6 John Sheridan 7 Alison Astalos
8 Miguel Escalante 8 Louise McCook 8 Robin Ostrowski
9 Ronnie Grothusen 10 Rick Royle 13 Joe Reynolds
15 Gary Johnson 16 Ilona Varga 17 Joanne Lewandowski
17 John Skimelis 18 Andy Coeyman 18 Frank Mead
19 Russell Kohlmann 19 Greg Sharin 21 Bob Brannan
21 Paul Gleitz 24 Anthony Calderon 24 Don Davison
26 Fran Martone 27 Russell Finkelson 29 Amanda Tanay
30 Lawrence Bork

September

1 Patrick Vivalo 2 Michele Demaree 3 Diane Allen
3 Ronald Bomma 3 Kelly Cole 4 Lauren Gerber
5 Justin Birk 5 Wayne Connelly 5 Angela Kochon
6 Howard Dombroski 7 David Whalen 10 Jim Mowczan
10 Jeff Wyant 11 Susan Stafford-Smith 11 Mark Szemiot
11 Susan Williams 13 Emerald Platzer 16 Tom Petraglia
17 Mark Borchert 19 Edward Docker 19 Katie Stone
23 Robert Morris 25 Joe DePiero 26 Ken Herceg
26 Jim Janeczko 27 Chuck Raftery 28 Dave Mishkin
28 Jim Register 28 George Richdale 30 Eric Cadenelli

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Monmouth County Park System
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PARK SYSTEM



Location, Location, Location

Real Estate agents often mention how important location is when 'buying' a home. So if keeping visitors away from your 'nest' is the goal, we recommend following what these eagles did at the **Manasquan Reservoir** this past season. Build your nest in a tree surrounded by water. When it came time to place leg bands on the 2013 season's two new eaglets, wildlife scientists were unable to get to the tree because of the water. And, they will be unable to band (or track) any other eaglet born here in the future unless the adults change nest location.

...In Another Part Of The Park



Naturalist **Susan Harasty**, who has quickly become one of our eagle experts and reports regularly on their progress takes a guest through a water demonstration this past Earth Day in April at the Environmental Center.