



Green Link

An Employee & Volunteer Newsletter of the Monmouth County Park System



Dorbrook Recreation Area

May/June 2011

No Business Like Snow Business

Arctic conditions certainly kept us busy this past winter as the parks featured a near-steady ground cover of snow beginning in December, and months of steady f-f-f-reezing temperatures. Many visitors and staffers took up new winter activities (it was a record-breaking cross-country ski rental season), experienced “thunder-snow” for the first time, and learned what it felt like to be truly snow-bound (as in, “I literally can’t get out my front door!”) The term “cabin-fever” also took on new meaning.

Some park staffers perfected their new-found skills on the equipment, and all were asked to keep an eye out for damaged park signs on the roads. Why? Because there were so many snowplow, equipment and vehicle-related accidents! It was a season of many firsts, and some novel scenes both inside and outside of the parks.

Grooming the Cross-Country Trails.

The Park System snowmobile and groomer were used to make some of the first, formal cross-country ski trails at Thompson Park this year. Trail users were elated, especially those who were trying out skis for the first time.

Staffers with cross-country ski experience were tapped to learn the ins and outs of the equipment and to implement a more extensive series of trails at Thompson (and scope out a few other locations).

Continued, page 3



Assistant Golf Superintendent Chris Brawley of Charleston Springs is an experienced cross-country skier, which earned him the honor of testing out the new equipment and helping to implement a formal trail grooming program.



Thompson Park Rangers, like Al Lopez pictured here, also got schooled in Trail Grooming 101.



Grooming the tracks gives skiers a pattern to follow (as opposed to skiing willy-nilly through the fields and possibly getting lost).



To keep newly groomed trails intact, signs are posted to direct walkers, snow shoers and people with pets.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“A LEGACY”

Guess what? We have a story to tell. It has often been said in the field of marketing, if you want to make a sale you have to tell a

story about your product. In order to continue to be successful in business, you need to create a brand that instills confidence and that people come to recognize and trust.

Another business objective is to become recognized as a legacy organization, like the National Park Service. Webster defines legacy as “a gift, bequest, as something received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.” When you think about it, “legacy” organizations have established a prominent public presence through their:

- **Mission** – defined purpose
- **Identity** – name, trademark, logo or slogan
- **Reputation** – substance, integrity
- **Recognition** – customer service, quality
- **Credibility and Trust** – doing what they say they’ll do

They have also become known and respected by their customers and the community they serve.

We have, without a doubt, become a legacy organization. We have a logo and brand name that the public recognizes and trusts.

We have a logo and brand name that the public recognizes and trusts.

This was made evident in the 50th Anniversary film spot graciously donated by former Middletown resident and NBC Nightly News Anchor Brian Williams. The citizen survey we conducted in 2009 also confirms that we are viewed positively by the community. We have been blessed to be able to provide our citizens with quality facilities and services as stewards of their county’s natural and historic resources.



Middletown Native Brian Williams recounts warm memories of visits to Thompson Park for our 50th Anniversary on our Facebook page.

In this complex world and in these difficult economic times, we have also become the “stress reliever” by continuing to create and provide outstanding quality recreation experiences for our citizens. In looking back, we are indeed fortunate to have benefited from the foresight of Charles Pike, our County’s first Planning Director, and the commitment of our County Board of Chosen Freeholders to make the vision of a quality Park System a reality.

I believe we have become an important institution with a tradition of moving forward. We are “Monmouth County’s Best Idea.”

“If you foolishly ignore beauty, you will soon find yourself without it. Your life will be impoverished. But if you invest in beauty it will remain with you all of the days of your life.” --Frank Lloyd Wright



A Beautiful Investment: Preservation of Longstreet Farm began in the 1960s, and continues today. This Visitor Center built in the mid 1990s was designed with surrounding historic buildings and landscape in mind.

Cross-Country Ski Rentals Move Indoors. Staff from Outdoor Adventures set up shop in the Visitor Center this year for ski and snowshoe rentals (moved from the Outdoor Rec Barn). This provided a heated location (with a bathroom) for renters to pay, as well as additional staff to cover the rentals. Did you know? We have over 50 pairs of skis and poles (and boots to wear with the skis), plus 20 pairs of snow shoes, and all were rented out on more than a few of the busier days this season.



Skis and boots were available in sizes for both children and adults.



Park visitors test their skills in the snow.

Plowing and Shoveling...Then More Plowing and Shoveling. Snow removal was a near-constant activity this winter. And many staffers who were once novices on the plow, snowblower or front-end loader are now experts.



Principal Park Ranger Travis Bryan (front) and Sr. Building Maintenance Worker Jacques DiPane (back) clear the VC walkway for the umpteenth time.



Ranger Jim Gregory plows at Shark River Park.

Clearing the Ice. Some people might not think of it, but park rangers certainly do. Even the ice needs to be cleared of snow after a storm.



Staffers at Turkey Swamp Park took great care to make sure the skating pond was cleared of snow for the ice skaters....



...and of course, the walkways leading down to the pond.



Toasty! Turkey Swamp Park Staff (l to r) Assistant Superintendent Tom Fobes, Supervising Ranger Scott Schaff, Ranger Dave Whalen and Senior Ranger Darrin Morrissey check out this warming area/campfire near the lake.

Whoops! This truck (not one of ours) took a tumble while trying to improve conditions on an icy Brown's Dock Road at Huber Woods Park. Fortunately, no one was hurt.



Overtaken truck at Huber Woods

Park Snow Facts You May Not Know. While most employees are aware of our highly popular, original sledding hill at Holmdel, we have a second children's site at Wolf Hill. Never been there? This is what it looked like last winter.



The sledding hill at Holmdel. Very crowded.



The children's sledding hill at Wolf Hill Recreation Area in Oceanport. Less crowded.

Also, did you know that ice skating is available on the retention basin inside the entrance at Seven Presidents? (Sorry, no photos.) And, for the many inquiries we received from runners, walkers, hikers and dog walkers, we do NOT plow our trails



(natural surface or paved) after it snows, but we do plow paved and unpaved roadways.

A snowy trail at Shark River Park

GREEN NOTE

As you may know, one of our green efforts has been to cease the idling of vehicles, trucks, equipment, etc. Recently, Park Manager in charge Equipment Services/Construction and Repair Mike Janoski passed along this important information regarding the **State of New Jersey Anti-Idling Standards**. The law reads:

Idling of gasoline vehicles for more than 3 minutes is prohibited if not in motion. (There are a few exceptions: when repairing, during an emergency, waiting in line at the inspection agency.) Fines are \$100 for a passenger vehicle and \$250 for a commercial vehicle.

Idling wastes fuel and is harmful because of increased emissions. Here are some idling facts:

- An idling vehicle emits 20 times more pollution than one traveling at 30 miles per hour;
- **Idling wastes fuel: only 10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than turning the engine on and off;**
- In winter conditions, emissions from a cold engine are more than double the normal level;
- Fuel consumption is higher in cold weather;
- The best way to warm a vehicle is to drive it;
- Idling increases maintenance costs: it leaves fuel residues that contaminate motor oil and make spark plugs dirty;
- And now, idling is against the law.



No emission worries here. Mechanic Ron Bomma models the Park System's first Solar Powered Electric Utility Cart, which will be used as a utility vehicle for rangering and water service on the golf course. Since the cart will be out in the sun for much of the day, it can recharge as it works.

CONSTRUCTION NEWS & NOTES

New Exhibits at the Manasquan Reservoir.

Naturalists at the Environmental Center knew just what to do when they received word of a recently expired River Otter at Shark River Park. They had it preserved, and now it "lives" forever as a new exhibit for visitors to enjoy. Across the pond at the Visitor Center, staff from Graphics and Planning designed an exhibit that explains the purpose of the reservoir, shows how it was



River Otter

built, and describes many of the site's recreational options.



Visitor Center exhibit at the Reservoir.

New Construction. Installation of new Solar Panels at the Thompson Park Creative Arts Center were completed last fall and are now generating electricity. This is the Park System's third solar site.



Creative Arts Solar Panels



Seven Presidents Pavilion



Holmdel Shelter Bathrooms

Other projects recently completed include renovations to the pavilion at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, new bathrooms in the Holmdel Park Shelter Building, and accessible walkways at the Monmouth Cove Marina.



New accessible walkway and parking at Marina.

Wild Wildlife...

Seal-Fest at Sandy Hook! Resident seal-watcher and Naturalist Joe Reynolds led an informal seal-watching outing and invited park friends along to check out the area wildlife at Sandy Hook in February. They saw 50 seals! This photo shows Harbor Seals; the particularly rambunctious jumper is a juvenile.



Seals at Sandy Hook

Deer Carcass Feeds More Than Vultures. Most of us are familiar with the image of a roadside deer carcass and the turkey vultures that eventually arrive to feed on it. But a motion-activated camera, set up in a field at Dorbrook for a few weeks this past winter, caught the parade of additional species—the ones we don't normally see—who also fed on the carcass.



12/16/10 A coyote and a skunk



12/21/10 A turkey vulture



12/23/10 A red fox



12/25/10 The expected return of the turkey vulture, with a less expected friend on Christmas, the red tail hawk.



12/26/10 Three skunks



12/26/10 The beginning of a blizzard does not distract these crows from feeding.



12/28/10 The first to return after the storm...a feral cat



1/1/11 But it's not until this coyote shows up days later that the carcass is dug out from the snow.



1/1/11 Do you think these deer are aware of what is underfoot...or hoof?.



1/3/11 It's a coyote convention as 6 appear to feed on the frozen remains (even though they are reportedly a solitary species!)

In all, there were a few thousand images captured from December 7 through January 4, and they demonstrated feeding habits and animal behaviors that many park staff had never seen first-hand before. Who knew feral cats and skunks were such active feeders? Or that skunks were happy to feed along-side coyote? Or that the red-tailed hawk and crow feed on deer carcass, sometimes alongside vultures?

Visitor Services staff also learned a thing or two about the importance of quickly posting park condition updates to our website, Facebook page, and automated phone lines. The week after the season's first big snowfall (Dec 26-Jan 1), there were about 6,000 visits to our website! Of these approximately 1,700 went to the Holmdel Park page and 1,260 to the Winter Activities page (listed/linked off the homepage as "Sledding & Skating Info"). We even had 154 visits to the Wolf Hill Recreation Area page and another 63 visits to the Off-Leash Dog Area page. Think about this in terms of the number of phone calls that did not have to be answered individually.



Finally, have you seen the Visitor Services Totem Pole newly installed outside the Creative Arts Center? It was hand-built during a staff development exercise and represents all the different program areas, including golf. Who knew it would serve as an effective snow measurement tool as well—7 totems of snow in January.

Totem pole

Meanwhile, Just Outside the Parks...

This snowman was crafted on the boardwalk at Seaside Heights by Urban Recreation Supervisor Courtney Bison and her family as they waited for the New Year's Eve fireworks to start. They used ketchup for the mouth, relish for the eyes and their own winter-wear to complete the outfit. Passers-by liked the idea so much the snowman became an instant celebrity with many pausing to have their pictures taken.



Snowman at Seaside Heights

(Reportedly, later on and further down that same boardwalk, another celebrity—Snookie—posed for pictures as well.) Only in Jersey!



Watching the fireworks on New Years with a friend.

Corner

Volunteer

Dave Roche volunteers with Outdoor Adventures on hiking programs, and has also developed some "awesome" rail-to-trail biking programs, according to staff. Dave works regularly with the Cultural Services Division as well. "He's invaluable," says Recreation Supervisor Rachel Cohen. "Dave has excellent organizational skills,



Volunteer David Roche

is willing to work in any capacity we ask, and offers creative program ideas—I really can't say enough nice things about him." To date, Dave has accumulated nearly 1000 volunteer hours in the parks...but that's not all! He also reached another important milestone recently—about 1,500 miles out on our trails in the past year alone.

STAFF SHOTS

To prepare for the Spirit of the Jerseys State History Fair at Allaire State Park in May, Longstreet Farm staff visited the site this past winter and met with the director of Allaire Village, Inc. (l to r) John



Curtis, Executive Director of Allaire Village; and Longstreet staffers Sandy Bayard, Marion Gitterman, Bill Neugebauer, Sean O'Herron, Sarah Duterte, and Eileen Allan.



The group viewed the blast furnace, used to convert bog iron to pig iron to be shipped to New York City for further processing. James Allaire purchased this property as a source of raw iron for his New York based marine engine manufacturing company. It was called Howell Works.



The year of the rabbit arrived a little early for Senior Landscape Architect Laura Lieneck. While visiting Monmouth Cove Marina last fall to inspect the new walkways, she found the rangers huddled over this rabbit. It had been abandoned out in the open by the gas pumps. Laura noted that another few hours there "and a hawk likely would have picked it up." Clearly domesticated and easy to pick up, Laura promised to find it a good home and after temporary foster care with a few different park employees, the rabbit found a new home.

Eagle Life Goes On.

Manasquan Reservoir Eagle Update! After 37 days in the nest, the bald eagle eggs finally hatched on February 11 & 18th, 2011. There are 2 chicks. Our experienced parents



The current bald eagle pair on their nest in February.

had to venture out to find food, since the reservoir was completely frozen. Bald eagles lay from 1 to 3 eggs about the size of a goose egg. After hatching, young bald eagles grow rapidly, adding about a pound of body weight every 4 or 5 days. At 6 weeks (late March), the birds were almost the size of the parents! They will take their first flight at 10 to 13 weeks (late April/early May).



Welcome New Hires!

William Vega, Mechanic/Welder 1/18/2011

Joanne Lewandowski, Clerk, Equipment Services 1/21/11

Kevin Wilhalme, Golf Ranger, Howell Park 1/31/11

Patrick Vivalo, Golf Ranger, Hominy Hill 1/31/11

Deborah Senese, Rec Leader, Longstreet Farm 2/28/22

Susan Harasty, Naturalist, MREC 3/28/11

Farewell Retirees!

John Caddock, Marina Mechanic (and 40 year veteran of the Park System) 1/1/2011

Nancy Borchert, Director of Personnel, Safety and Training (also with 40 years of service) 4/1/2011

May

- 1 Drew D'Apolito
- 2 Steve Clayton • Denise Dockweiler
- Vincent Maresca
- 3 Laura Lieneck
- 4 Leigh Schneider
- 6 Tim LaVance
- 7 Heng Chin • Craig Fraser
- Brian Sullivan
- 8 Patti Conroy • John Eisemann
- 9 Ken Thoman • Bob Ward
- 10 Ann Sage
- 11 Cathy Barfield • Marijane Bruncati
- Rob Kolczynski • Janet Ryan
- 12 Dave Compton • Peter D'Angelo
- 14 Laurie Marswillo
- 15 Chris Davidson
- 18 Helen Fiore • Karen Livingstone
- 20 Tom Noordzy
- 21 Shawn Allen
- 25 Hank Schreiber
- 26 Michelle Scolletta-Gosha
- 27 Daniel DeSoucey • Jeff Szalc
- 30 Gary Stedman

June

- 2 Liz Haenchen
- 3 William Neugebauer
- 7 Andy North • Bill Vaughn
- 8 Regina DeVeau
- 9 Spence Wickham
- 12 Jeanne Bezio
- 13 Nick Podsvirow
- 15 Aileen Desiata • Nick Samaras
- 16 Stephanie Weise
- 18 George Moran • Matt Ruding
- 19 Tom Dillon • Eric Doren
- George Siebert • Edward Zarella
- 20 Bill Kampe
- 22 Karen Rutt
- 23 Alan Archer
- 24 Vern Hasselbrock
- 26 Mike Janoski • Betty Leong

July

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

Green Link



An Employee &
Volunteer Newsletter
of the Monmouth County Park System

Monmouth County Park System
805 Newman Springs Road
Lincroft, NJ 07738-1695

May/June 2011

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MONMOUTH CO.
PARK SYSTEM

Say “GOODBYE To Winter



Young photographer-in-training and daughter of Friends of the Parks Director Maria Wojciechowski, Katie caught this stunning image at Turkey Swamp Park in February.

And “HELLO” To Spring

One of the first trees to blossom in March, these Magnolia flowers emerged at Deep Cut Gardens. *Photos by Maribeth Gardner*

