

Green Link



An Employee
& Volunteer
Newsletter
of the Monmouth County
Park System

September/October 2009

Golf Courses Serving the Community

20 YEARS OF SUPPORT FOR THE FFA/TURF EDUCATION PROGRAM

Since the late 1980's, county golf staff have been actively involved with the FFA or Future Farmers of America, in a vocational program for Landscape/Turf Management available at the Monmouth County Career Center (MCCC). Golf staff host student field trips to our courses, help teachers stay abreast of the latest technologies and advances with training programs, and provide vital program support through General Manager **Dave Pease**, an enthusiastic advisor since the early days of the program. Golf Superintendent **Bob Duncan** and Asst. Golf Superintendent **Chris Brawley** actively support this program as well.

One of this program's key components is a living, outdoor classroom in the form of a real golf hole that students help build and maintain. Students are now assisting



Students doing calculations



Students doing mark-out

FFA students learn about building a golf course through interpreting architectural designs, calculating measurements and doing mark-outs, rough shaping the features of the hole, installing drainage, irrigation and bunkers; and selecting the proper soil mix and grass types for building a golf hole.

with construction of the school's new and improved second golf hole (the first was removed to make room for new construction/additions). There will be two tee areas, a fairway, putting green, more hills, and bigger bunkers at this new 105 yard hole.

This time around, according to Horticulture Teacher and FFA Advisor John Neyhart, Dave Pease fostered a partnership between the school and some companies to donate materials as well as their expertise, working directly with students on certain aspects of course construction. Dave, who was a member of the FFA himself in high school, "has amazing knowledge, and his interest

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NEW! Check Out Our Nature Blog

Park Naturalists have been posting short write-ups and gorgeous pictures of local wildlife and plants in bloom since last spring. They catch what's happening as it's happening, and provide interesting background. Posts are regularly updated, so there's something new each week. Tell your friends! www.monmouthcountyparks.com, click "Natural Resources" then "Nature Now." Do you have a nature tip for the blog? Contact **Joe Reynolds** at Huber Woods or **Chris Lanza** at Manasquan Reservoir.

When an adult Red Fox was seen tearing through a grassy field near the Farm Path at Huber Woods last May, park naturalists blogged about it. Here's a partial excerpt... Out and about this time of year in search of food for newly born pups. Red Foxes are solitary hunters who feed on rodents, rabbits, birds, and other small game—but also on fruit and vegetables, fish, frogs, and even worms. A Red Fox's ability to adjust to different habitats and food sources has earned it a legendary reputation for cleverness and craftiness.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER



“Missed Opportunities”

We are all aware of the economic downturn that has affected not only our lives but also the lives and livelihoods of others around the world. We read about the

financial difficulties that our state faces in putting together a budget for the coming year, and the proposed closing of 221 state parks in California to help that state meet its current fiscal crisis. While the fiscal picture is not a pretty one, it does force us to think creatively about how we are going to continue serving our citizens and meet the challenges before us.

One of the ways we can continue to grow is to look at our database for missed opportunities. Another is to review what we are doing and how we can improve by doing it faster, smarter and better.

The current fiscal picture forces us to think creatively; look for missed opportunities; and work faster, smarter and better.

It is, I believe, up to each of us to share what we know and can do in order to make a difference. We need to continue establishing strong relationships with our customers, make sure to say “thank you,” and strive to exceed their expectations. We also need to create an environment where our customers feel welcome and know they are being listened to.

We can also each take this opportunity to examine how we go about our daily tasks and try to reduce expenses, conserve resources, and enhance revenues. As conservationists, we are all responsible for the wise use of our resources. Our commitment to reducing the use of energy is one example of our common goals that can make a difference, not only in our operating expenses, but also in the global demand for energy.

I submit the challenge is yours and mine, and I encourage you to think about how we can improve what we do each and every day. During times like these, we all need to rise to the occasion, seek out missed opportunities and recognize that our day does not stop at 5 o'clock.

“You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going because you might not get there.”
--Yogi Berra



A festive entrance display and staff with a smile (that’s Sr. Park Ranger Paul Basquill) combine to create a welcome atmosphere at Thompson Park Day.

Golf Supports FFA..., continued



General Manager of Golf Courses Dave Pease shows support for students in the FFA program.

and enthusiasm has sparked a lot of great program features” including exposure to a large field of experts, says John. He really cares about seeing the kids learn and succeed.

The outdoor classroom also feeds directly into a primary strength of the FFA program, “hands-on” learning. Students clearly like this aspect of the program, as well as having a clear career direction. Sean Cusack, for instance, an FFA senior who works at Howell Park Golf Course part-time, says that mowing practice on the golf hole and his pest management skills came in very handy. Through the years, the



The new golf hole takes shape as of June.

Park System has hired a few MCCC students. Current Hominy Hill Greenskeeper **Jeff Faistl** is a successful graduate of the FFA.

DOING YOUR PART TO HELP THE PARK SYSTEM GO GREEN

Across the country and the world, government agencies are joining the “Going Green” cause to protect the environment and our natural resources. This means making choices that reduce and even attempt to reverse the negative impact of our actions on the earth and its resources. The Park System has always been a part of this cause, and we are now stepping up our efforts.



Last May, work was completed on the Park System’s first solar power panels at the **Sunnyside Equestrian Center**. Paid for in part with a state grant from NJ Board of Public Utilities, the 90 panel-20 kilowatt system by SunPower now powers about 40% percent of the building’s energy needs. Another set of panels, generating an additional 36 kW, would bring this percentage up and will be added soon.



Did you know? The photovoltaic cells in the solar panels convert energy from the sun into DC electricity. However, AC electricity is what is commonly used. These special inverters convert the energy so it can be used.



Four new solar faucets like this one were installed last spring in the men’s restroom at **Hominy Hill** along with new solar flush-o-meters for the toilets and urinals. In addition to better hygiene and hands-free access, these items save water, decrease the number of working parts (knobs and handles that eventually may need repair), and are powered by ambient light. Batteries in the units store the energy for later use. More good news! The flush-o-meters on the urinals and toilets save about 2 and 3 gallons per flush, respectively.

We can each do our part to fulfill this mission by simply changing some of our thought processes and routines, especially when it comes to energy use. In these difficult economic times, saving energy helps lower costs and reduces the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming

Saving energy lower costs and helps reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.

A list of energy saving tips were recently distributed throughout the parks. To emphasize their importance, they are repeated here.

- Turn off the lights
- Use programmable thermostats
- During winter, turn the heat down 5-10°F at night or when buildings are unoccupied
- During summer, turn the air conditioning up 2-5°F, and up further (5-10°F) when the buildings are unoccupied
- Reduce the operating temperature of hot water heaters to 120-130°
- Switch off one row or every other row of lights
- Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs (now available at Central Supply, along with a host of other green products)



A “Green” Product Explosion. The staff at Central Supply are hard at work exploring all the new green products now available, and determining which ones are both cost-effective and work well. Check out all the new “green” office product catalogs!



“Green” Light Bulbs and More. Just some of the green products now available in the parks: recycled paper; non-toxic, phosphate-free and biodegradable Simple Green Car Wash; energy-saving fluorescent

light bulbs; recycled ink cartridges; biodegradable Mutt-Mitts; and peroxide-free window cleaner.

- Turn off computers each night
- Designate a building captain to make sure thermostats are adjusted, lights are turned off , windows/doors are closed and secured, etc. each night and over weekends
- Don't idle your vehicle (and enforce this policy)
- Use lower fuel usage/smaller vehicles and carts
- Clean or replace furnace/air filters monthly
- Schedule all heating/air conditioning for annual cleaning
- Drain a bucket or two from your hot water heater annually, to reduce sediment buildup that can reduce efficiency
- Can any of your grass areas be converted to no or low mow?
- Seal building gaps and cracks around door/windows



Ranger Ivan Gottstein of the Manasquan Reservoir mows the grassy strips around the Visitor Center entrance and lots. As part of our green effort, park staff are encouraged to explore places where it may be possible to convert mow areas to low mow or no mow areas.

- Purchase energy efficient appliances
- Look for ways to perform tasks less expensively. Break the mold of continuing to do something less efficiently just because that is what we've always done.

Special thanks to Tom Fobes, Assistant Superintendent of Parks and Green Committee Energy Usage Specialist for providing most of the information for this article.

PARK NEWS & NOTES

Super Cool Robot Can Hike Trails at Holmdel. A team of computer scientists from New York University (NYU) has programmed a robot to “learn” how to navigate an obstacle course in a natural environment. In other words, it can hike the rugged terrain of trails and fields on its own. After some smart programming and much practice in **Holmdel Park**, robot “27” can now figure out how to get around obstacles using his “eyes” (a set of front-mounted cameras), and a GPS unit. Last March a British TV crew filmed famous theoretical physicist and show host Dr. Michio Kaku as he interviewed the team



(l to r) NYU computer scientists Yann LeCun, Marco Scoffier and Pierre Sermanet look on as “27” handily navigates the fields around the Hilltop parking lot at Holmdel Park on a test run before the trail hike for its big TV debut.

about the robot's capabilities. The taped segment on intelligent robots is scheduled to air on the Science Channel sometime this fall. Here's something to consider: Will robots eventually be able lead hikes in our parks?

Golf Center Gets Face lift. Supervisor **Joe Smith** and Senior Carpenters **Bob Petrow** and **Joe DePierro** built a beautiful new, raised-panel custom counter for the Golf Center at **Hominy Hill** this past spring. Note the attention to detail as matching wood ceiling panels (built by **Joe Smith** and **Eric Testa**) were made to mount the new fans after the old fluorescent lighting units were removed. Also, Senior Carpenter **Ray Smith** installed the floor, Carpenter **Frank Mead** helped with installation, and Painters **Pat Cernak** and **Tommy Tune** did all the staining and walls. **Helen Fiore** of Operations and Maintenance coordinated the design elements, the electricians rewired the new light fixtures and computer locales, and the plumbers did a beautiful job refurbishing the restrooms. Talk about a team effort! According to Joe, the whole C&R crew was there at one time or another putting the project together, and it shows.



Hominy Hill Golf Center crew work the new counter. It may be hard to see them all, but they are (l to r) Coordinator of Golf Instruction **Bruce Gundaker**, Golf Ranger **Ilona Szabo-deBucs**, Golf Center Manager **Eric Kaplan**, and Golf Rangers **Michelle Santore** and **Henry Kikolski**.

STAFF AT WORK, AROUND THE PARKS



Holmdel Park Ranger **Tom Osborne** tends the fire at the shelter.



Naturalist **Erika Bozza** leads a program.



Bill Diehl of Thompson Park Maintenance takes care of some landscaping outside of Park System Headquarters.



Longtime Program Employee and Volunteer for Outdoor Recreation **Don Brocklebank** offers some support to this young rock climber at Outdoor Expo.



Carpenters **Frank Mead** and **Ray Smith** install new cabinets at Tatum Park's Red Hill Activity Center.

American history in Monmouth County, designed by Museum Curator **Cheryl Stoeber-Goff** for the Heath Wing in the Red Hill Activity Center at Tatum Park.

Staff Move Back Into the VC. This past May, Visitor Services staff moved back into the newly constructed Visitor Center. Here are a few snapshots before and after the move.



Staffers were invited to tour the new building last winter. Public Information Officer **Susan Walsh** takes a moment to contemplate the site where the fire was thought to have started on the old building, near the back by the porch.



Planner and Historic Preservation Specialist **Gail Hunton** (pointing) managed this staff tour as well as the re-building effort, and is now the Park System's foremost expert on just about every aspect of this building and its history.



Ta Da!!! The finished VC, as of last July at the Open House. In spite of all the modern upgrades, it is very hard to tell the difference between the old building and new, even for staff who work there every day!

CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

• **Marina Renovations Nearly Complete.** By the time you receive this newsletter, this project should be nearly complete. But did you know? New features at the marina include improved bathroom facilities (now ADA accessible) and a new staff area and office. You can see the duct work, pipes and stalls start to take



shape in this early construction photo. And, check out the new water lines they had to run outside as part of the project.



• **Infrastructure Repairs on the UTT.** Located in the western-most tip of the county portions of the Union Transportation Trail received some much needed attention. Check out the before and after photos of this culvert (which helps direct the flow of water beneath this section of trail).



Before



After

• **Howell Park Golf Course Golf Center Improvements Underway.** Changes were extensive enough (check out the floor being jack-hammered apart) that staff were relocated to temporary office “pods.” Even with such cozy accommodations, Howell Park Golf Ranger **Nick Samaras** and Senior Golf Ranger **Amy**



Pease with this golfer are all smiles.



• **Old Visitor Services Building Gets Some Attention, Too.** Renovations are underway (again) to convert Building #551 to accommodate the Construction and Repair Crew. Here, Senior Landscape Architect **Robin Ostrowski**



and Assistant Civil Engineer **Heng Chin** take measurements to place an ADA accessible parking and entrance area.

The Park System Green Committee



(Top row, l to r): **Jim Register**, Special Projects, Operations & Maintenance; Trade Supervisor **Bob Brannan** from Construction & Repair; County Park Manager **Mike Janoski** from Operations & Maintenance; Assistant Superintendent, Purchasing, **Bob Cain**; and Chief Landscape Architect from Planning **Andy North**.
(Bottom row, l to r) Assistant Superintendent of Parks **Tom Fobes**; Storekeeper **Mark Miller** from Central Supply; Asst. Golf Course Superintendent **Sam Camuso** from Charleston Springs South; and Asst. Director of Parks and Recreation **Bruce Gollnick**.



September

- 2 Michele Santore
- 3 Diane Allen • Ronald Bomma
• Kelly Cole
- 4 Lauren Gerber
- 5 Wayne Connelly • Angela Kochon
- 6 Howard Dombroski
- 7 David Whalen
- 9 Ray Smith
- 10 Brad Bradach • Jim Mowczan
• Jeff Wyant
- 11 Susan Stafford-Smith • Mark Szemiot
• Susan Williams
- 13 Emerald Platzer
- 16 Carol Hobbs • Tom Petraglia
- 17 Mark Borchert
- 23 Robert Morris
- 25 Joe DePierro
- 26 Ken Herceg • Jim Janeczko
- 27 Chuck Rafferty
- 28 Dave Mishkin • Jim Register
• George Richdale
- 30 Eric Cadenelli

October

- 1 Bob MacDonald
- 2 Donna Browne
- 4 Jeffrey Ward
- 7 Paul Bagdanov • Joanne Jubert
• Patrick Killeen • Skip Supczynski
- 8 Barbara Berry • Amy Pease
- 9 Bill Murray
- 12 Bill Greene
- 13 Bob Duncan • Ron Luepke
- 14 Tom Mullens
- 17 Dawn Clayton • Matt Douglas
- 18 Barry Barone
- 20 David Hollabaugh • Bill Shaffer
- 21 Dave Dellett • Laura Garavuso
- 22 Matt Coleman • Claire Morris
- 23 Terry Grewen
- 27 Jenn Troisi
- 28 Michele Clampffer • Maribeth Gardner
- 29 Kivin Brown

November

- 1 Ivan Gottstein
- 2 Frank Bradford
- 3 Rich Pillar • Paul C. Zimmer
- 4 Susan Liu
- 5 Fran Lorelli
- 8 Terry Normand
- 11 Bill Diehl • Tony Eng
• Mark Miller • Jim Truncer
- 13 Bob Holmes
- 14 Wayne Theilen
- 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

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

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September/October 2009

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2009 Date Minder

Sunday, Sept. 13

Sprint Triathlon, Seven Presidents 7:45am

Saturday, Sept. 19

Deep Cut Plant Swap, 10am-2pm

Sunday, Sept. 27

Harvest Home Festival, Longstreet Farm,
11am-5pm

Manasquan Reservoir 5 Mile Run, 9am

Saturday, Oct. 3

Timberbrook Triathlon, Man. Reservoir, 8:30am

Sunday, October 4

Walnford Day, 11am-5pm

Weekends Oct. 9-10, 16-17, 23-24

Creatures of the Night Wagon Rides,
Huber Woods

Sunday, Oct. 18

Thompson Park Day

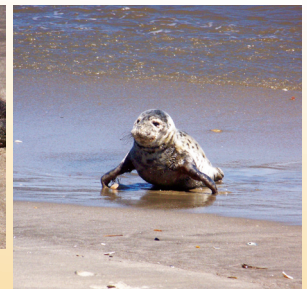


Love Bird-Turtles?

Senior Landscape Architect **Laura Lieneck** took this painted turtle pair's photo as they were heading to their "home" behind the grate (right) at Holmdel pond last spring.



Here she is resting after her journey



How Perfect.

This female Grey Seal made her way onto the beach and right in front of the camera of Naturalist **Joe Reynolds** at Sandy Hook last April.