

Green Link

Monmouth County
Park System



An Employee &
Volunteer Newsletter
of the Monmouth County
Park System



Thompson Park

September/October 2010

Celebrating Our 50th: Events

This past April, park visitors enjoyed a special Arbor Day program and helped us plant a commemorative 50th Anniversary Tree, a Red Oak, at Shark River Park.



Assistant Superintendent of Parks, Tom Fobes, talks to local girl scouts, an area church group and park visitors about our first park and the significance of Arbor Day.

Also in April, Mr. Truncer gave a "Tea & Talk" to a few dozen visitors in the Thompson Park Visitor Center.



Mr. Truncer's "Talk" was preceded by a "Tea" introduction by Historic Walnford Site Supervisor Sarah Bent. Afterwards, visitors enjoyed the actual beverage and some home-baked goodies.

In May, the Park System assembled a new parade float and "marched" in the Freehold Memorial Day Parade. Longstreet Farm staffers Recreation Specialist Phil Andras and Debbie Senese. Led our procession and were joined this year by staff from operations.

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Shark River Rangers Jim Gregory (left) and Rob Kolczynski (right) plant the Red Oak at the field's edge.



The children give the tree its first dose of water.



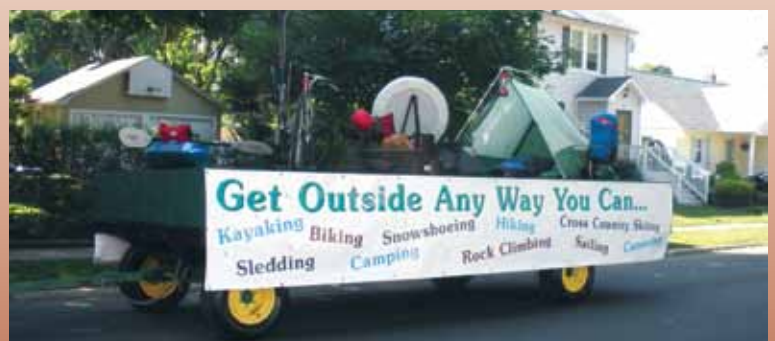
After the planting, Tom takes the group for a short walk, and highlights the importance of our forests and parks.



Ranger Jim Gregory puts the finishing touches on the new tree, a healthy dose of mulch to help hold in the moisture.



Outdoor Adventures staff created this festive parade float to highlight all the "things you can do" in our parks (banners designed by Graphics). The float was towed by the Outdoor Adventures van driven by County Park Manager Mike Janoski.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER



OUR FIFTH 10 YEARS (2000-2010)

Our fifth decade began with the purchase of land for the Metedeconk River Greenway, preservation of the Yellow Brook Tract, and opening of the Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center.



The Yellow Brook Tract is an undeveloped piece of property off of Rt. 33 in Howell.

In 2002, the Sunnyside Equestrian Center opened and the Park System hosted the annual Special Park Districts Forum for the second time. The Coastal Activity Center opened in 2003 to serve urban youth in Asbury Park and that same year, the Park System co-hosted the Association for Living History, Farm & Agricultural Museum. County voters also supported an increase in the Open Space Trust from \$10 million to \$16 million annually.

The year 2004 saw CAPRA grant reaccreditation; launch of the Deer Management Program; opening of the Sprayground and Challenger Place Playgrounds at Dorbrook Recreation Area and the Skateplex at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park; and dedication of the 9/11 Memorial at Mount Mitchill Scenic Overlook. Rehabilitation of the Thompson Park Visitor Center was completed in 2005.



The Park System opened two barrier-free, universal access playgrounds in the last decade at Dorbrook in 2004 and Seven Presidents in 2009.

During 2006, county voters approved changing the Open Space Trust from a fixed amount of \$16 million to a rate of 1.5 cents for each \$100 dollars of assessed valuation. The program "Creatures of the Night" at Huber Woods celebrated its 10th Anniversary, and much to our chagrin, a fire destroyed the restored Thompson Park Visitor Center.

By 2007, annual Park System visitation topped 5 million for the first time; park acreage reached

13,000; new exhibits were installed at Longstreet Farm thanks to funding from the Friends of the Parks; and two new rental/camping cabins were added to the campgrounds at Turkey Swamp Park.



During 2008, Mr. Daniel Seitz donated his 4.7 acre historic family home and personal property as an addition to Hartshorne Woods Park. A new rose garden opened in the parterre at Deep Cut Gardens, and a second off-leash dog area opened at Wolf Hill Recreation Area.

The rose garden that closed due to deer damage at Thompson Park in the late 1980s, reopened in 2008 at Deep Cut Gardens (a fenced property that can keep the deer out).

In 2009, the reconstructed Visitor Center opened at Thompson Park and Tony's Place, the Park System's second barrier-free playground, opened at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park. Restoration of the Activity Center (formerly the Seabrook-Wilson House) at Bayshore Waterfront Park and renovations to the Acquisition & Design Building at Thompson Park were completed. The Park System's first solar panels were installed at the Sunnyside Equestrian facility.

Looking back, we can all be proud of what we helped create: 38 park and recreation areas that preserve over 14,500 acres of land, more than 4,000 programs that we offer annually, and the over 5 million visits we host each year.

We can also be proud that Monmouth County established the first County Open Space Trust in our state, and that we are the first public park and recreation agency to be accredited in the nation.



The Park System relies on support from organizations such as the Friends of the Parks.

We should be thankful for the support we receive during the year from more than one thousand of our county's citizens who volunteer their time and talents to help maintain the parks. As professionals, we are also fortunate to have the support of our Board of Recreation Commissioners, the Board of Chosen Freeholders and not-for-profit organizations such as the Monmouth Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Parks, and Special People United to Ride (SPUR).

"Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish." -- John Quincy Adams, 6th U.S. President



This Ranger truck with fire suppression gear (and sign advertising select parks) was the third vehicle representing the Park System at the parade for our 50th anniversary this year, driven by Senior Park Manager Rick Royle.

On a rainy Sunday afternoon this past June, the Park System held its formal Anniversary Celebration—hosted by the Friends of the Parks—at the Visitor Center in Thompson Park. Taking the inclement weather in stride, more than 150 attendees took advantage of the day’s activities.



Staff instructors from the Creative Arts Center, Katie Stone (front), Christina Carlson (back) and Barbara Zarella (not pictured) were on hand to give demos on the pottery wheel and prepare commemorative notecards for visitors to stamp and take home.



The crowd gathered under the main tent out front to hear opening remarks.



Hot off the presses! Volunteer Jim Henry—working very hard with park staff for almost a year—developed and designed a comprehensive “identi-tree” guide for the trees on the Visitor Center front lawn. It was launched at the party, and copies are now available inside the VC.



One highlight of the day was a wagon tour (staff, mules and wagon borrowed from Longstreet Farm) led by Friends member and volunteer Pete Brady.



Pre-sales for the official Monmouth County Park System book, scheduled for completion in August, were handled by Louise McCook and Barbara Berry.



Naturalist Sam Skinner was on hand to talk about wildlife in the parks.



Last but not least, visitors enjoyed one of two birthday cakes and a keepsake anniversary wine glass.



STAFF & EVENT NEWS

This past May, park staff joined Monmouth County Vocational School district, Future Farmers of America (FFA) representatives, and private companies for the Dedication Ceremony of the “FFA Links” Golf Hole they all helped build at the Monmouth County Career Center on Kozloski Road in Freehold. As reported in an earlier issue of the Green Link, Park System golf staff teamed up with students, teachers and members of industry to help instruct and construct this educational “outdoor classroom.”

Park System Assistant Director Bruce Gollnick and Director James Truncer were in attendance when Park System golf staff received this much earned recognition.



(l to r) Shark River Golf Course Superintendent Bill Murray; State FFA President Hannah Toft; Former Asst. Superintendent at Hominy Hill and currently with Atlantic Irrigation Jeff Allen; Assistant Superintendent of Charleston Springs South Chris Brawley; Rick Crock of Storr Tractor Company; Park System Golf Course Superintendent Bob Duncan; Vice President of Monmouth County FFA Chapter Freddy Jones; and General Manager of the Monmouth County Park System Golf Courses Dave Pease.



The yellow flower is a Black-eyed Susan, the orange-red one on the right is Butterfly Weed. There is a monarch caterpillar and chrysalis in the leaves.



That's a wood mushroom in the corner, with a common black ground beetle.

Part-time Naturalist Sue Draxler has been featured in these pages for her artistic talent before, and it is now time to do so again. Sue recently completed a series of wildlife murals in the birthday program room at the newly renovated Huber Woods Environmental Center. Here's a peek at some of her work...



A Praying Mantis amidst a tuft of Wood Sorrel.



(l to r) The Garter Snake, a Common Yellowthroat Warbler and a Green Frog peeking out of the water.



John Mills of Princeton Battlefield, a NJ State Historic property, fires away!



John Mills (left) joined by Gary W. Stone (right) of Monmouth Battlefield, another state historic property, to shoot muskets.



The onlookers are from historical societies and sites interested in presenting living history programs, as well as members of the New Jersey Living History Advisory Council.

KA-BOOM! Normally one of our quieter sites, Historic Walnford hosted a noisier-than-normal workshop this past spring, entitled “Presenting the Past,” sponsored by the NJ Living History Council (NJLHC). During that event, attendees saw a demonstration on black powder safety procedures for living history programs.



On National Trails Day, June 5, approximately 25 volunteers helped out at Holmdel Park on the Marsh Trail. The trail had some tricky erosion problems and the volunteers and Rangers “rebuilt” the trail using some split rail fence wood; layering the pieces, drilling holes to secure them and placing stakes to hold them in. It was an “extreme job, a real feat of engineering,” according to Coordinator of Volunteers Karen Livingstone.

Volunteers (front, l to r) Meg Levinson, Eric Helms and Jay Schaeffer (Jerry Lingner is kneeling, right) work with ranger Tom Osborne to build a wall to stabilize an eroding section of the Marsh Trail at Holmdel Park.



More than a dozen volunteers of all ages also helped out at Popamora Point for a beach clean-up on June 6. After the March storms, there was still plenty to do in the way of



clean-up with pilings, miscellaneous lumber and other debris that washed ashore.

Volunteer staff and Rangers get busy at Popamora Point last June. That's Principal Park Ranger Chris Davidson (left) and Volunteer Jim Henry (right) placing debris in the front end loader.

Here's the pristine beach after they were finished. What a difference!

Programs: What's "Hot" Right Now

Some recent trends in program popularity include digital photography, sewing, archery, and toddler hikes. Most notable lately however, is the growing strength of family programs. Those that have sold out quickly include:

- Family Camping • Family Pottery
- Campfires • Equine Exploration

Spring Into Spring Camping-family style received lots of positive feedback, especially concerning staffers AnnMarie Osnato and Michelle Clampffer for “putting their heart and soul into the program” and special features such as the hike in the dark, bedtime stories, and helping participants feel safe while having fun outdoors.



Family programs seem to work best when they are offered as one session, in the early evening. There are a host of recent successful nature programs that fit this profile, including *Lantern-lit Seining, Sunset Solstice Beach Walk, Sunset Hike, and Fireflies.*

Also, the Volleyball Leagues at Seven Presidents filled again this year with waiting lists, and one new event that received lots of good press was the *Dorbrook 500.*



Sports & Fitness launched the Dorbrook 500 race this past spring as a 50th Anniversary Program, that's Rec Specialist Jim Butler lining up the kids. Just shy of 60 participants raced in Cozy Coupes (and tricycles, we certainly weren't going to turn anyone away). There were three different age groups: 2's, 3's, 4's; trophies, t-shirts and “Euro-stickers” DOR or MCPS were given out.

Keeping The "Wild" In Wildlife

The Caterpillar Diaries: Butterfly enthusiast and seasonal Naturalist Shannon Evans kept a journal this year of the caterpillars she ordered for her program, *Flight of the Monarchs*. Here are some excerpts from her careful notes and accompanying photos of their development



After some shipping mishaps, 13 instar Monarch larvae arrived (May 27) and "Holy defoliation!" within a few days, they seemed to have doubled in size (May 29). Those are milkweed leaves they are eating.

They continue to eat, produce "frass," and grow, grow, GROW! (June 1) Hormonal changes will signal larvae to pupate and set off to find the perfect place for transition; a twig or branch preferred. They spin silk "buttons" from organs on their head called "spinnerets" that act as anchors to attach their bodies, hanging in upside down in "J" formations inside the terrarium they are growing in. (June 4-7)



Stunning light green chrysalids! There is no longer a mad dash to pull milkweed from the backyard to feed the hungry caterpillars each morning. Now, they are 'dissolving' into a liquid and will change completely into their butterfly shape. If I look very closely, I can see the butterfly developing inside. (June 7-12)



I am happy to announce that the first butterfly has emerged! I came home to find her (yes, a girl!) clinging to her broken chrysalis. Males have a black spot on each hind wing, females do not. The wings were still wet and flimsy, but she would soon start working to pump blood into them. (June 15)



Released! Ultimately, as the butterflies emerged, I waited about 8-12 hours for each to settle (and demonstrate their ability to drink) before releasing them into the fields of milkweed at Huber Woods. (June 15-21)

This strange looking Cedar-Apple Rust Fungus was seen growing on the cedars in the Claypit Creek section of Hartshorne Woods this past spring. In case you were wondering, it is in its mature gall stage. There's a hard "nut" inside those alien-looking, gelatinous tendrils!



Ann Sage (left) of Cultural Services and Ann Marie Osnato (right) of Urban Recreation drove the bus for a trip to the Native American Arts Festival at the Ran-cocas Reservation this past spring. They are pictured here with one of the wolf-dog hybrids from Howling Woods Farm. All the dogs are mixed breeds (half wolf) and very affectionate.



This was the largest, called Sampson, who looks like he could have starred as an extra in one of the Twilight movies.



When Henry Mercer built Hominy Hill Golf Course on about 120 acres of his 400 acre farm, he began winding down most-but not all-farm operations. He kept some of his favored pedigree breeds, like this Charolais white bull (1974), in the adjacent fields for golfers to enjoy.

CONSTRUCTION NOTES

Demolition of the old house and construction of a new parking lot were well underway at the Claypit Creek section of Hartshorne Woods Park this past spring. This project is particularly important since Claypit Creek offers some beautiful views of the Navesink River in this part of Middletown.



The Fischer-Stern house, before demolition; view from Locust Point Bridge.



A close-up of the house.



Halfway through demolition.



A pile of rubble.



The area is now a parking lot.



View from bridge (after demolition).

Staff Scenes

Jan Galanti of Outdoor Adventures clocks the Manasquan River Canoe/Kayak Race from her "island" in the river.



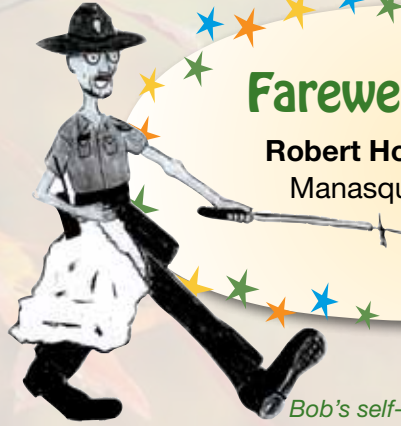
Assistant Superintendent Tom Fobes, Turkey Swamp Park Manager Chris Plantamura and Ranger Mike Towle work the campground "booth" at Outdoor Expo.



(l to r) Rangers Michele Maggio now at Thompson Park, Angela Kochon of Tatum Park and Senior Ranger Darrin Morrisey of Turkey Swamp Park on paddle boat duty at Outdoor Expo.

Farewell, Retirees!

Robert Holmes, Park Ranger,
Manasquan Reservoir - July 1



Bob's self-portrait



September

- 2 Michele Demaree
- 3 Diane Allen • Ronald Bomma
- Kelly Cole
- 4 Lauren Gerber
- 5 Wayne Connelly • Angela Kochon
- 6 Howard Dombroski, Jr.
- 7 David Whalen
- 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
- 19 Edward Docker • Katie A. Stone
- 23 Robert Morris
- 25 Joe DePierro
- 26 Ken Herceg • Jim Janeczko
- 27 Chuck Raftery
- 28 Dave Mishkin • Jim Register
- George Richdale
- 30 Eric Cadenelli

October

- 1 Bob MacDonald
- 2 Donna Browne
- 4 Jeffrey Ward • Gary Waters
- 7 Paul Bagdanov • Joanne Jubert
- Patrick Killeen • Skip Supczynski
- 8 Barbara Berry • Amy Pease
- 9 Bill Murray
- 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 Kris Bonello • 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
- 11 Bill Diehl • Tony Eng
- Mark Miller • Jim Truncer
- 13 Bob Holmes
- 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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1960-2010
Gold and Growing

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Monmouth County Park System
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SWEET SHOTS...



*Children enjoy the fishing derby at Outdoor Expo this past spring.
Photo taken by staff photographer Maribeth Gardner.*



Providence shines on Supervising Park Planner Joe Sardonia at Hominy Hill this past Earth Day. Photo taken by Park Ecologist Ken Thoman.