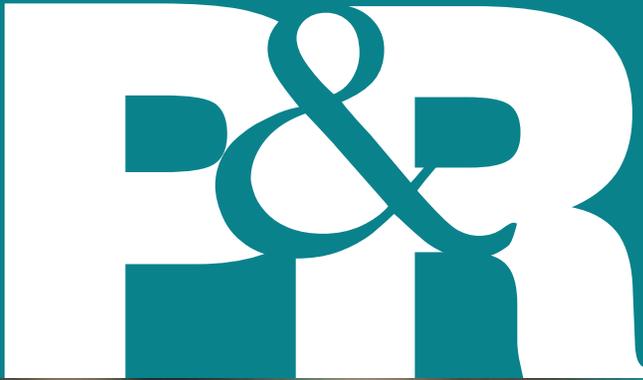


illinois

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# PARKS AND RECREATION

The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



# aquatics

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See how some park and recreation agencies use aquatic recreation to serve their communities

# Word gets around



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## FROM THE EDITOR

When I was young, every Monday night Mom would help me gather my gear and put me in the car to take me down to the Lombard Park District pool for swimming lessons. I was reluctant at first but then with routine came reward. The more my skills improved, the better I felt as I moved from guppy to minnow to fish and so on.



Although the programs have changed, the premise is the same. Experiences such as these are made possible through agencies across the state.

Now what I find most intriguing about aquatics in park and recreation agencies is the planning, management and skill that goes into building, maintaining and managing these facilities. For the public, a park or recreation agency pool or splash pad is just fun in the water, as it should be but, behind the scenes, a lot goes into making those facilities safe, exciting and a true asset to the community.

There is a unique story behind each agency and their aquatics programs and facilities. Some seasoned park districts have a rich history behind their current aquatic offerings. Others have years of planning, surveying and determining what their particular community needs prior to building a new pool or recreation center. No matter what the story each park district may have about the pools, slides and splash pads, rest assured there has been some serious consideration and careful management behind bringing each project to fruition.

Aquatics are important to the community for so many reasons. First of all, many park and recreation agencies include swimming lessons as part of the aquatic curriculum. Individuals of all ages should know how to swim. This is a life lesson that is typically taught at an early age and gets stronger as children grow older. It also teaches children self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. People of all ages should take advantage of this education because one never knows when the skill of swimming could be used to save a life.

Some agencies offer water aerobics, underwater running and places for rehabilitation or simply a comfortable place for seniors to enjoy aquatic activity. Pools and recreation centers provide places for families and friends to relax for the day and make some memories. Natural recreation in ponds, rivers and beaches such as fishing, boating, windsurfing, canoeing or kayaking can also make for an incredible aquatic experience.

Park and recreation agencies make all these activities possible. Learn what some agencies have done to make them successful in this special aquatics issue of IP&R magazine.

*Rachel Laier*

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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Peter M. Murphy  
IAPD President and CEO

## Board Member Training is Essential to Better Serve your Community

### IAPD Commissioner Boot Camp Seminars a Success

The IAPD Boot Camps that took place throughout the state during the month of June welcomed new and seasoned board members alike to comprehensive training on governance, advocacy, finance, the Open Meetings Act and ethical requirements for elected officials.

I would like to thank attorneys Michael Jurusik and Mallory Milluzzi from Klein Thorpe and Jenkins, Ltd. and partners Paul Stephanides, Kenneth Florey, Guy C. Hall and associate M. Neal Smith from Robbins Schwartz that spoke on the latter two topics as well as our experts on park district finance, Susie Kuruvilla, Executive Director, Gurnee Park District, Craig Talsma, Deputy Director/Director of Administration and Finance, Hoffman Estates Park District and Frederick Lantz, CPA, Partner-in-Charge, Government Services, Sikich LLP.

As new board members take office it is important to review with the entire board the governance protocols for the district. One good way to do that is to have a job description for the duties of a board member. In addition, I would recommend the adoption of a board member's creed to act as a compass for board engagement with the district's staff as well as among board members. The following is a suggestion to get your board started and should be customized to fit your agency's culture.

### The Board Member's Creed

#### 1. As an individual member of the board, I will:

- Recognize the integrity of my fellow board members and the merit of their work;
- Be motivated only by a desire to serve the people of my community;
- Recognize that it is my responsibility, together with my fellow board members, to see that the agency is properly run – not to attempt to run it myself;
- Work with the executive of the agency – not over or around him or her;
- Conduct board business only at legally called board meetings;
- Remain politically nonpartisan on agency issues;

- Attend continuing education programs to learn about the proper duties and functions of a board member and to stay abreast of the trends and issues affecting the field.

#### 2. In performing my proper functions as a board member, I will:

- Deal in terms of general agency policies;
- Function in meeting the legal responsibility that is mine, as part of a legislative, policy-forming body, not as an administrative officer.

"Success in any endeavor does not happen by accident. Rather, it's the result of deliberate decisions, conscious effort and immense persistence – all directed at specific goals."  
– Gary Ryan Blair



#### 3. In maintaining desirable relations with other members of the board, I will:

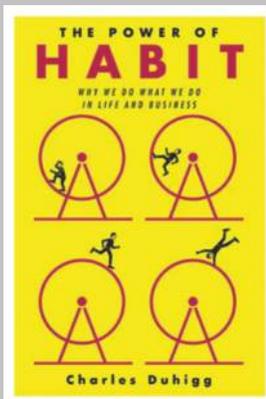
- Respect the opinions and decisions of fellow board members;
- Recognize that authority rests with the board as a whole not with me as an individual;
- Make no disparaging remarks in or out of meetings about fellow board members or the agency;
- Recognize that promising in advance how I will vote on any proposition under consideration closes my mind to other considerations, facts and points of view that may be presented in the meeting.
- Make decisions in board meetings only after all sides of the question have been presented;
- Consider unethical (and thus avoid) secret meetings of the board held without the presence of the executive.

**4. In meeting my responsibility to my community, I will:**

- Attempt to appraise fairly both the present and the future needs of the community;
- Attempt to procure adequate financing and support for agency programs, facilities and services;
- Interpret, as best I can, the needs and attitudes of the community to fellow board members and the executive;
- Insist that business transactions of the agency be ethical, open and above board.

**5. In working with the executive, I will:**

- Hold the executive responsible for the administration of the agency and give her or him the authority commensurate with that responsibility;
- Expect the agency to be administered by the best-trained professionals available;
- Participate in board decisions only after considering the recommendations of the executive;
- Expect to spend more time in board meetings on strategic planning policy and procedures than on day-to-day operations;
- Give friendly counsel and advice to the executive;
- Refer all complaints to the executive and, if necessary, for other issues, insist that the source present them in writing to the board as a whole;
- Present any personal criticisms of employees to the executive and not to the employees;
- Provide adequate safeguards for the executive and other personnel so they may perform their duties on a professional basis.



**Recommended Reading**

*The Power of Habit Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* by Charles Duhigg

Humans as well as organizations are creatures of habit but this behavior can be explained and even changed. A book that compellingly outlines this phenomenon is called the Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg. He brings a new understanding to habits and why they exist. Individuals such as

Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps and civil rights hero Martin Luther King Jr. are examined. Companies including Proctor and Gamble and Target are also studied to see how positive habits can mean the difference between success and failure. It's a good read and may change your perspective on intractability of habits.

## 2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 18

**Legislative Golf Outing**

White Pines Golf Club  
Bensenville Park District

August 17

**Park District Conservation Day**

State Fairgrounds, Springfield

August 20

**Summer Golf Tour Event #3**

Foss Park Golf Club  
Foss Park District

September 9

**Summer Golf Tour Event #4**

Prairie Bluff Golf Course  
Lockport Township Park District

September 27

**IAPD Awards Gala**

Traditions at Chevy Chase Country Club  
Wheeling Park District

October 8-10

**NRPA Congress & Exposition**

Houston, Texas

November 7

**Legal Symposium**

Hamburger University, Oak Brook

January 23-25/14

**IAPD/IPRA Conference**

Hyatt Regency Chicago

For the most up-to-date  
Calendar of Events, please  
visit the IAPD website  
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**IAPD**  
Illinois Association of Park Districts



By Debbie Trueblood  
IPRA Executive Director

## A Mentor's Influence Serves a Community for Generations

This summer, many students all over the state are graduating from college and looking forward to a career in parks and recreation. There will be many challenges ahead of them, starting with finding a position and making the transition to a professional career. For our ongoing professionals, what do you remember about those first couple of years in the field? What do you think you could have done differently? Did you make good choices? Was there someone who was there for you to help guide you and help start you on your way?

The idea of mentorship has been key in so many discussions within IPRA lately. More than formalized education, members want, need and reflect on the importance of mentors and role models.

Mentorship has always been important to me, personally. My career developed in the association world, not the park world but I had many mentors who taught me and influenced my life and my career. One Executive Director for whom I worked early on, Marsha Turner, taught me about the importance of tight fiscal controls, prioritizing and leading an organization through a financial turnaround. She also showed me the value in establishing programs, policies and procedures that will structure the organization for a successful future. Another Executive Director I worked for, Nancy Nelson, taught me the importance of building relationships. She had a reputation for knowing everyone, everywhere. While I would go into a meeting "all business," she would open with lengthy conversations about the person's family, recent successes and ideas for how we could help each other. In lobbying and negotiating, she was always kind and transparent, even with the opposition. She would tell me, "You catch more flies with honey." I saw over and over so many examples of success that came from her approach because people could trust her and so they were more willing to create partnerships in the future. Both of these mentors taught me the critical combination of policy, process and partnerships which became key pieces of my leadership approach. I am continuously grateful for having them as mentors in my life.

At the IPRA Education Institute with Ian Hill in April, one of his many messages was that people should make a donation to IPRA's foundation, specifically for the Professional Development School Diversity Scholarship (which Ian created and provided the initial \$1,200 matching donation). He encouraged people to

make this donation in honor of a person who helped them and changed their direction. Donors are to make their donation and say "This is for So and So who helped me and guided me." This is a way to honor those people in our lives who made us stronger.

During the Foundation meetings, the Pay it Forward Campaign was also designed to reflect on giving back to the field of parks and recreation which created a career path for all professionals in the field (including parks, recreation, facilities, communications and marketing, administration, etc.). The idea is that the foundation has restored the endowment to \$245,000 and we want to leave that alone and only spend from the interest. As such, we are trying to raise the endowment to \$500,000 so that the interest will allow us to do more with the money while preserving the fund for posterity. The interest will be spent on scholarships for all professions within parks and recreation and hosting member events for IPRA professionals as a way to give

"Mentors taught me the critical combination of policy, process and partnerships which became key pieces of my leadership approach."



back to the membership. In the Pay it Forward Campaign, we talk about the people who helped us in our careers who mentored us, pushed us, supervised us and encouraged us along the way. It is important that we give back to the profession so that future generations will have similar experiences as well as opportunities to learn and grow. Each member of the foundation board was also asked to compile their own story about a person who helped them and who they honor with their donations.

Recently, in our strategic planning focus groups, we heard loud and clear, over and over, that what the average member is looking for is mentoring and networking. We heard that people want mentoring at the beginning of their career and that new leaders want mentoring from seasoned leaders and everything in between. As the new plan for 2014-2016 is devised, you can expect that

mentoring and networking will play a role in that plan. While we know that many mentors, like friendships, develop organically in the work place or through networking we also understand that a need has been expressed for a more formalized program. We are working to develop a program to meet this need. If you have ideas, please feel free to share them with me at [debbie@ilipra.org](mailto:debbie@ilipra.org)

In the meantime, however, what else can you do in terms of mentoring others? We all have those people who have helped us- but what can you do to help others?

One thing you can do is to take the opportunity, this summer, when your agency is fully staffed with seasonal employees, to create opportunities for summer staff to see the potential they have for a career in parks and recreation. Some of your summer workers may be students serving as camp counselors, lifeguards, recreation instructors, sports coaches, etc. Have you ever talked to them and told them about the possibility of going into parks and recreation as a career? What if you told them your story- maybe you started out in the field when you were their age, or perhaps you were in college majoring in something else and changed your major when you learned about a career in this field. Maybe you started your career in another field and found yourself in parks and recreation (as I did!). Telling them your story creates a safe space for questions and guidance about what options they have available to them. Did you know IPRA has a student membership for \$47 a year? What if you gave gift memberships to your top summer employees as a way to thank them for their work and encourage them to see it as a career, not just a summer job. IPRA has a list of short videos featuring professions within parks and recreation on our youtube channel at the following link: [http://m.youtube.com/#/user/IPRAAssoc1815?&desktop\\_uri=%2Fuser%2FIPRAAssoc1815](http://m.youtube.com/#/user/IPRAAssoc1815?&desktop_uri=%2Fuser%2FIPRAAssoc1815). What if you included some or all of these videos in your employee training or orientation to give them an idea as to how they fit into the community of parks and recreation? What if you brought along your intern or other young or new professional to IPRA events that you identify as being "higher level" such as a committee meeting or educational event and introduce them to professionals? Any one of these ideas might help a young person in their career and you would have the benefit of knowing you mentored someone the way someone years ago mentored you.

In the meantime, it's going to be a great summer this year. People in special olympics, senior olympics and teen camp olympics will find themselves beating their personal records and challenging themselves to do more. Kids at camps all over the state will learn new skills and make memories they'll never forget. Families will bond together at pools and water parks and people of all ages will learn how to swim. Festivals and special events will bring entire communities outside together in celebration. For all that YOU do to make parks and recreation a part of every community across Illinois, thank you. Additionally, for the person who helped you become who you are today, a special thank you to them too. A mentor's influence serves a community for generations.

## IPRA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 12, 2013

### Facility Management Section Meeting

Gurnee Park District

Hunt Club Community Center

1:30PM - 3:00PM

July 17, 2013

### Communications & Marketing Section - Summer Social & Luncheon

Carol Stream Park District Coyote Crossing

12:00PM - 3:00PM

July 18, August 8, August 29, 2013

### Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) Exam Preparation - SERIES OF THREE CLASSES

Chicago Park District

Fosco Park

9:30AM - 1:00PM

July 18, 2013

### Recreation Section Meeting

Channahon Park District Arrowhead Community  
Center

11:30AM - 12:30PM

July 25, 2013

### Chicago White Sox vs. Detroit Tigers

US Cellular Field

1:10PM - 4:00PM

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at [www.ilipra.org](http://www.ilipra.org).





Jason Anselment  
Legal/Legislative Counsel

## Legacy of Legislative Success Continues During Spring Session

As you know, this year IAPD is celebrating its 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Success at the Capitol has been one of IAPD's trademarks throughout our history. As a reflection of the tremendous legislative support we receive, last month the General Assembly adopted **House Resolution 276 (Madigan, M.)** and **Senate Resolution 256 (Cullerton, J.)**, which recognized and congratulated IAPD and its members on our many accomplishments and our 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

While we take great pride in celebrating our past achievements, IAPD remains focused on advancing our membership. So, it was fitting that we continued our tradition of legislative success during the Spring Session. As a result of IAPD's advocacy efforts, many significant bills that will greatly benefit our member agencies are headed to Governor Quinn for signature while numerous unfunded mandates did not move forward.

### Six IAPD Platform Bills Headed to the Governor

With great support from our bill sponsors, we were able to pass six IAPD Platform initiatives during the Spring Session, an achievement matched by few (if any) other organizations. If signed by the Governor, the following IAPD Platform initiatives will help our member agencies save much needed funds while also increasing efficiency in their operations.

**SB 1637 (Kotowski, D. / Nekritz, E.)** is a significant legislative victory that will expedite the payment process under the OSLAD grant program by allowing agencies to receive 50% of the funds at the time the grant is awarded. Currently, agencies do not receive reimbursement until the project is completed, so this measure will help avoid unnecessary borrowing costs by allowing agencies to access grant funds much more quickly. The remainder of the funds will be distributed quarterly on a reimbursement basis.

**HB 1404 (Bradley, J. / Biss, D.)** is also important legislation that will result in savings on our members' construction projects for years to come. Currently, contractors are required to post performance bonds on local government contracts as small as \$5,000. As these bonds have become more expensive and difficult to obtain, most contractors have passed the expense down to units of local government and others have been excluded from bidding. **HB 1404** will help alleviate some of those costs and also lower bid prices through increased competition by allowing units of local government to choose to waive requirements on projects that are \$50,000 or less, which is the current standard for State construction projects.

**HB 1353 (McAsey, E. / Holmes, L.)** amends the Public Funds Investment Act to allow park districts, forest preserve districts and conservation districts to invest in high-grade municipal bonds which

often earn a slightly higher rate of return than other investments permitted under that Act. This legislation will be particularly helpful to those IAPD member agencies that simply reference the Public Funds Investment Act in their investment policies.

Another IAPD Platform initiative, **SB 1410 (Cullerton, T. / Welch, C.)**, will allow park districts to adopt a supplemental appropriation ordinance up to the amount of additional revenue which becomes available subsequent to the adoption of their annual appropriation ordinance. This change will permit agencies to spend these unexpected revenues during the fiscal year without going through the Park District Code's publication and hearing rules for amending their budgets.

**HB 2232 (Tryon, M. / McConnaughay, K.)** also amends the Park District Code to clarify that park districts may enter into multi-year contracts to purchase energy from a utility or an alternative retail electric supplier. This legislation will help agencies save additional funds on their energy bills by giving them flexibility to negotiate multi-year contracts when energy prices are low.

The legislative objectives of a sixth IAPD Platform initiative, **HB 2875 (Williams, A.)**, which proposed to extend the protections of the Recreational Use of Leased Land Act for lands leased by private landowners to local governments, is also headed to the Governor for his signature. **SB 1042 (Harmon, D. / Williams, A.)** will encourage private landowners to make their property available to the general public for recreational and conservation purposes by restoring recreational immunity under the Recreational Use of Land and Water Areas Act.

### Other IAPD Supported Measures Pass Both Chambers

**HB 1200 (Sosnowski, J. / Syverson, D.)** is also an IAPD supported measure that will reduce the number of free admission days that are required for an aquarium or museum funded by the tax that is levied under the Park District Aquarium and Museum Act. Currently, the Act requires these facilities to be open to Illinois residents free of charge for at least 52 days a year. **HB 1200** reduces this unfunded mandate to 26 free days.

**HB 2488 (Verschoore, P. / Link, T.)** will give local governments another means of satisfying the advertising requirements under the Local Government Professional Services Selection Act by utilizing email or their websites. IAPD supported this measure because it provides a less costly option for local governments to satisfy the advertising requirements for architectural or engineering services when they apply but still preserves the exemption from those advertising requirements if a local government already has a satisfactory relationship with an engineering or architectural firm.

**HB 2540 (Smiddy, M. / Van Pelt, P.)** amends the Prevailing Wage Act to delete the duplicate requirement that a public body file a copy of its prevailing wage rate determination with the Secretary of State. Currently, a public body is required to file a copy of this determination with both the Secretary of State and the Illinois Department of Labor by July 15<sup>th</sup> every year. If signed into law, beginning in 2014 a public body would only be required to file a certified copy of its determination with the Illinois Department of Labor.

### Local Government Revenues Protected, Unfunded Mandates Avoided

As important as all of these IAPD initiated and supported measures are to our member agencies, many bills that IAPD helped sideline this past spring are of even greater financial consequence.

For instance, **HB 89 (Franks, J.) / HB 3041 (Kifowit, S.)** would have changed the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law to prevent taxing districts from capturing the CPI-increase to their extension limitation if the district's total EAV is less than the previous levy year. This legislation would have had devastating long-term implications for districts that are experiencing declining property values. With your help, we were able to educate lawmakers on the negative impact of this legislation and defeat **HB 89** when it was called for a vote on the House floor in April.

If enacted, **SB 68 (Lightford, K.)** would have also had terrible financial consequences by gradually increasing the minimum wage to more than \$10 per hour and then adjusting it annually by inflation. Because park and recreation agencies operate on fixed budgets and do not have the ability to simply raise taxes and fees to cover mandatory wage increases, **SB 68** would have forced park and recreation agencies to cut the number of part-time and seasonal positions that are offered. Most of these employees are youth, and these are often their first job opportunities. To compound the problem, reducing the number of critical part-time positions such as lifeguards, day camp counselors, umpires and referees would have also necessitated cuts to the number of recreational programs offered.

**HB 924 (Hoffman, J. / Raoul, K.)** would have amended the Prevailing Wage Act to require bidders on local government contracts to meet the "responsible bidder" standards under the Illinois Procurement Code, including a requirement for bidders to participate in a training / apprenticeship program. This standard would have been difficult for many small businesses to satisfy, thereby increasing labor costs because of a reduction in the number of eligible bidders, particularly on smaller projects. The legislation would have also taken away local control by applying state bidding standards to local governments.

**SB 2363 (Martinez, I.)** would have eliminated an important exemption that many local governments use when procuring architects and engineers. Under current law, local governments are allowed to forego the Local Government Professional Services Selection Act's notice, evaluation, and selection requirements if the local government has a preexisting relationship with one or more firms.

**HB 1537 (Burke, D.)** would have required IMRF employers to submit a report to the IMRF listing each of its employees during the past 12-month period, including part-time and seasonal employees regardless of whether they participate in IMRF. This would have required employers to unnecessarily compile information about summer youth and seasonal employees and transmit it to IMRF without reimbursement.

In addition to these unfunded mandates, several "government transparency" bills were also introduced that would have increased the burden on local governments by requiring them to duplicate or otherwise reformulate information that is already reported to numerous public agencies and is otherwise available through the Freedom of Information Act.

For example, **HB 1555 (Cross, T. - Sandack, R. / Dillard, K.)** would have required all units of local government to provide specific information to the Illinois Department of Central Management Services for posting on the Illinois Transparency and Accountability Portal, including detailed information such as title and salary information for employees as well as certain pension data. After passing the House, IAPD worked with the sponsors to have an amendment filed which would have removed park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts from the new mandates had the bill moved forward in the Senate.

**HB 3312 (Ives, J.)** would have required local governments to post and maintain volumes of information on their websites in perpetuity. Each local government would also have been required to create and maintain a searchable expenditure and revenue database had the bill been enacted. As with all of the foregoing proposals, there was no new funding associated with this proposed mandate so it would have resulted in increased cost were it not for our efforts.

### IAPD's Efforts Significantly Improve Other Legislation

Finally, IAPD also worked to substantially improve legislation before it passed both chambers. As introduced, **HB 983 (McSweeney, D. / Althoff, P.)** contained a number of arduous changes to the rules for issuing alternate revenue or double-barreled bonds. Among other things, the original bill would have reduced the number of signatures required to trigger a backdoor referendum to only 500 regardless of the size of the district and would have also increased the number of days to obtain those petition signatures from 30 to 90.

As a result of our efforts, current law will continue to apply to the vast majority of alternate bonds issued by park districts, and the new requirements will only apply to alternate bonds that are payable solely from enterprise revenues. For those bonds, the number of days to obtain petition signatures for a referendum will increase from 30 to 45 days and if the district has more than 2,666 registered voters, the number of signatures needed to trigger a backdoor referendum will drop from 7½% to 5% of registered voters up to a maximum of 5,000 and a minimum of 200 signatures.

The version of **HB 983** that was originally introduced contained a number of draconian provisions that would have made it much more difficult for local governments to issue alternate revenue bonds. Fortunately, IAPD was able to work with the bill's sponsors and others to modify **HB 983** to a point where local governments who have responsibly issued alternate bonds for many years like park districts will not be punished because of the actions of a relatively few other units of government with failed projects.

### Grassroots Advocacy Is Key to Legislative Success

IAPD is proud to continue our tradition of legislative success by delivering first class advocacy services to our member agencies. Our achievements during the Spring Session would not have been possible without your grassroots advocacy efforts. Thank you again for all of your support and for helping IAPD achieve another successful legislative session!

by **Michael Kelly**, General Superintendent and CEO of Chicago Park District

Chicago Park District Natural Aquatics Ranges from

# Nature Education to Classic 'Fun in the Sun'

With 26 miles of shoreline along Lake Michigan, 11 stocked park lagoons, countless ponds and several parks that line the Chicago River, the Chicago Park District offers residents and visitors alike a myriad of opportunities to enjoy natural aquatics. Most of the district's formal programs were born out of the highly sought after "Nature Oasis" program. Created to give Chicagoans of all ages the opportunity to experience the wonder of nature in the city, "Nature Oasis" originally was launched in the summer of 2001 with seasonal, nature-based family activities. Today, thousands of children and families canoe through the Chicago River, kayak along the lagoons or learn about fish and wildlife near various bodies of water at their local parks. In addition to creating recreational opportunities throughout our more than 8,100 acres of parkland, the Chicago Park District also offers a variety of activities along the lakefront, river and lagoons.





### **Family Kayaking Events**

Each year, hundreds of Chicago-area families put on their sun screen and beat the summer temperatures by dipping their paddles into one of the district's various lagoons during our Family Kayaking Events. Dozens of participants enjoy hours of exploration and environmental education. The program was created to support a wide range of community-based, family-focused nature and science educational programs. The restoration of several Chicago natural areas such as the award-winning restoration of the historic Jens Jensen Prairie River in Humboldt Park offers endless opportunities for the community to enjoy recreation and learn at the same time.

### **Fishing Programs**

In the middle of an urban city like Chicago, it's very easy to forget that such a quiet relaxing experience is available. One of Chicago Park District's most popular programs, the Family Fishing Program is hosted select weekends throughout the summer. Classes are for families with children ages six and up, or small groups of up to 30. The Chicago Park District supplies the rods, reels, bait and fishing instructors and "Fish`N Kids How-To-Fish" instruction booklets. A short Tenkara-style fly fishing and fly tying lesson are part of the fun.

During the week, daily sessions for up to 30 kids per session are also available, with the district serving an estimated 300 participants per day. Fishing takes place at one of the 11 park lagoons or at one of seven lakefront locations. Fishing sessions last an average of 35 minutes. Classes are free and open to the public, with pre-registration required. The fishing programs are in partnership with the Chicago Park District, the Illinois Conservation Foundation, The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and Westrec Marinas.

### **Chicago's Beaches**

Some of the city's gems, Chicago's beaches, are enjoyed by millions of visitors each year. Whether you plan to use the beach to sunbathe, play volleyball or swim, the Chicago Park District goes through great lengths to keep the beaches clean, safe and comfortable for its visitors. In order to ensure optimal conditions for swimmers, last year the district began to provide beach goers with real-time water quality results at 16 out of 24 designated swim beaches. Real-time water quality results are obtained using predictive modeling, which uses weather data to predict bacteria levels in real-time. This method improves the accuracy of water quality information provided to the public and reflects the most current conditions instead of conditions at the time of the most recent test, often the previous day. Predictive modeling has been used successfully at several other Great Lakes beaches and is supported by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

The park district previously installed high-tech monitoring equipment at several beaches that collected data on weather and water conditions such as wave height, water temperature, rainfall and wind speed. Over the winter, the park district worked with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to build statistical models that use weather data to predict bacteria levels in real-time.

The Chicago Park District strives to integrate the latest technology in our efforts to manage and maintain the health of our beaches. With more than 20 million patrons visiting our beaches each summer, we work to provide the most accurate information in a timely fashion, while also searching for ways to keep our beaches healthy for all to enjoy.



### Non-Motorized Water Sports

Thanks to a group of surfing enthusiasts, in 2009, the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners changed a 75 year rule that prohibited non-motorized water sports from Chicago beaches. As a result, access to the Lake Michigan Water Trail for sports such as windsurfing, stand-up paddling and other non-motorized, self- or wind-propelled board or paddle sports is allowed year-round at designated beach locations. These activities are designed for those with expertise in the sport, as lifeguards are not on duty, and participation is at one's own risk.

### River Recreation to Grow with New Boat Houses, expanded River Walk

In the fall of 2011, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel stood with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announcing plans to make the Chicago River the city's next recreational frontier, with four new boathouses serving as anchors of the river's future development. As such, the EPA provided nearly \$1 million in grant funds to help clean up the river and spur job creation. This resulted in the planning for four boathouses with construction currently underway at Clark Park on the city's north side and Ping Tom Memorial Park, located about two miles south of the city's downtown area. "Much like Lake Michigan is Chicago's front yard, the Chicago River is our backyard, and should be an asset that people across the city enjoy, not avoid," Mayor Emanuel said. "Today's actions are the first of many steps that will lead to greater use of the river by Chicagoans and visitors alike," he added.

Designed by Chicago architect Jeanne Gang, the sites were chosen to line up with improvements the Chicago Department of Transportation is making to extend trails along the river, providing easier and more consistent river access for runners, bikers and walkers. The boathouses, constructed through a mix of private donations and public funds, will each contain a concession facility and will serve both as access points and attractions along the river.

The Chicago Riverwalk features public walkways, seating areas along the water's edge and attractions such as cafes, boat cruises, water taxis, bike rentals, tours and crafts made by local artisans. The Chicago Riverwalk runs along the south bank of the Chicago River, from Lake Shore Drive to Franklin Street. The Riverwalk is a public promenade and is free. Admission to individual attractions on the Riverwalk varies. Mayor Rahm Emanuel recently announced plans to complete the Chicago Riverwalk building a continuous walkway and recreational amenity connecting the lakefront with the heart of downtown.

The design plans include conceptual ideas for each of the six blocks from State Street west to Lake Street with distinctive identities and purpose, thematically named: The Marina, restaurant and retail space from State to Dearborn; The Cove, kayak rental and space for human-powered watercraft to dock from Dearborn to Clark; The River Theater, vertical access between Upper Wacker and the Riverwalk level by Clark to LaSalle; The Swimming Hole, a recreation area that may include a zero-depth fountain from LaSalle to Wells; The Jetty, floating gardens and fishing piers from Wells to Franklin; and The Boardwalk, an iconic bridge that would bring people from Upper Wacker to the Riverwalk level from Franklin to the Lake. The plans reflect the build-out limits and general design of the entire riverwalk project that was agreed upon through a public development process in 1999. That comprehensive design work took place with the cooperation of the United States Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers and other waterway stakeholders – community groups, commercial operators and the recreational users of the river.

The Chicago Riverwalk project is an exciting look in to the future. Chicago Park District offers so many opportunities to enjoy natural recreation outdoors. The community can partake in fishing, swimming, relaxing on the beach, kayaking, boating, learning and much more. With health and safety a primary concern, we are constantly looking for ways to improve and build on our current resources while creating new partnerships leading to even better facilities and additional attractions. Get to know Chicago Park District—come out and play!



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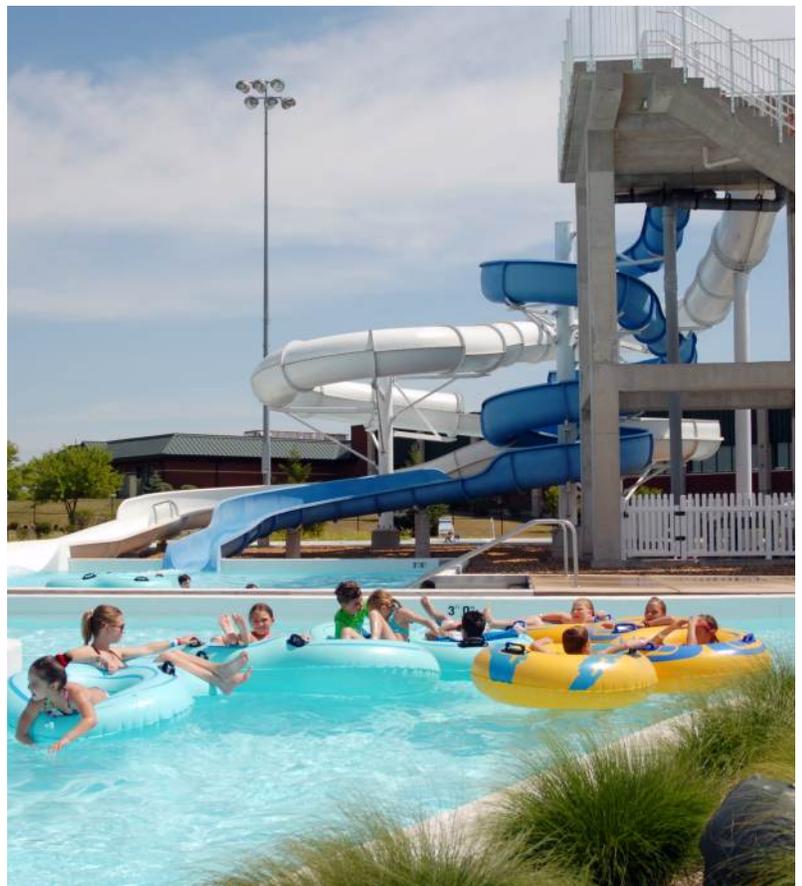
By **John Curran**, Executive Director, Tinley Park-Park District

COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES THE VALUE OF

# White Water Canyon

In Tinley Park – Park District the need to build a recreation center was accomplished with the addition of a water park. Program space was maxed out and residents were placed on waiting lists hoping the park district could find new locations to hold classes. The park district was using schools, churches, commercial locations and any space they could find. The solution was to build a recreation center. In 1998, the Tinley Park - Park District held a referendum to build a new recreation center. All focus groups and research pointed toward the need for a new recreation center but when the results were tabulated, the referendum lost.

“White Water Canyon quickly became the place to be in the hot summer months and continues to be the main summer attraction in Tinley Park.”



It was time to research what went wrong. More public meetings, surveys and focus groups were held. We wanted to get feedback in particular from those who voted no on the referendum. Through our research, we discovered that residents understood there was a great need for a recreation center but they wanted an outdoor swimming pool as well. Many felt if we built the recreation center the swimming pool would never be built. The decision was made to go to referendum in 2000 to build a recreation center and a water park. This time the referendum passed!

The Tony Bettenhausen Recreation Center opened in December 2001 and the White Water Canyon Water Park opened in June 2002 filling two needs of the community. Both these facilities are located on a 60-acre park site called Community Park right in the center of Tinley Park.

White Water Canyon quickly became the place to be in the hot summer months and continues to be the main summer attraction in Tinley Park. White Water Canyon encompasses 5 acres of fun and excitement for the whole family. The zero depth entry provides easy access to the shallow water that gradually increases to 12.5 feet deep to the diving well. There is a state of the art playground in 18 inches of water and for the more adventurous there is a 1-meter diving board and a 3-meter drop slide. The lazy river stretches 600 feet winding through the racing rapids and rolling under the tumble buckets. There are 2 slides; one body slide and one tube slide winding over 200 feet before landing in the plunge pool. With over 500 lounge chairs and plenty of deck space families have numerous choices on where to relax and get the best tan. The Canyon Café provides tasty meals for the hungry swimmers and there is a large sheltered picnic area. In 2007, a sprayground was added to the water park featuring 12 pieces of equipment that spray, squirt, and bubble up fun for the younger children.

# WebXtra

## Partnerships Bring a “Big Idea” to Fruition

by Elizabeth S. Kessler



Countless partners including McHenry County Conservation District, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, Friends of Hackmatack, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission came together to make the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge a reality.

On August 15, 2012, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar accompanied by U.S. Senator/Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin, visited McHenry County Conservation District's Glacial Park in Ringwood, IL and announced his authorization for the establishment of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois, joining the ranks of America's 556 national wildlife refuges. Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge will eventually provide up to 11,200 acres of habitat for wildlife as well as outdoor recreational opportunities within easy driving distance of millions of people.

“When President Obama unveiled his America's Great Outdoors Initiative two years ago, we set out to re-energize a conservation ethic for the 21st century and to help Americans reconnect to the natural world,” Salazar said. “Thanks in large measure to the work of local communities and stakeholders, the creation of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge will help conserve wetlands and prairies, while offering Americans a place to enjoy the great outdoors.”

“Friends of Hackmatack presented the case that the glacial landscape along the Illinois-Wisconsin border is a very special place,” said Cindy Skrukud of Solon Mills and Clean Water Advocate for the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club. “Now the scenic beauty and wildlife habitat of our oak savannas, rare tall grass prairie and the high quality Nippersink Creek have been recognized on the countrywide stage.” “A small group of people cared passionately enough about the natural spaces near where they live to pursue a dream of giving the area national recognition,” said Lenore Beyer-Clow of Woodstock and Policy Director for Openlands.

### Read the Full Story Online

Go to [ILparks.org](http://ILparks.org) and select Publications/IP&R Magazine/ WebXtras from the left column.

The water park season runs from the first Saturday in June to Labor Day and averages over 77,000 swimmers per summer with a high attendance mark at 92,218 in 2012. The water park has been profitable for its 12 seasons of operation averaging over \$720,000 in gross revenue annually while the hot summer of 2012 was the pinnacle in revenue with \$839,527. The Canyon Café operated in house provides 17% of the gross revenue. All surplus funds are funneled back into the water park for future capital improvements and upgrading equipment at the water park.

There are some major benefits the water park provides to the community. It not only gives families a place to enjoy their summer in a safe environment, but it provides employment for 149 individuals. Most of them obtaining their first jobs and learning what it is like to be in the working world. The on the job training at the water park provides high school and college students the learning experience they need to prepare them for future job opportunities. While some students think this may be an opportunity to get a good summer tan, they quickly discover there is a great amount of responsibility that comes with the job. They learn that people's lives are dependent on them doing their job well. This is demonstrated by the water park staff achieving 4 and 5 star ratings every year by independent auditing from Star Guard. This outstanding record raises the level of confidence in the patrons who use the water park.

Thousands of young children have learned to swim at White Water Canyon through the park district's learn to swim program starting with Aqua Babies, including private and age group lessons. Early morning exercise enthusiasts also enjoy river running in the lazy river and lap swimming in the main pool. Birthday parties are a regular staple at the water park. Parents rent the picnic pavilion and are able to enjoy their child's party while the water park staff takes care of the birthday child's needs. Outdoor movies, float nights and many other special events provide fun experiences for the whole family.

White Water Canyon has become the focal point for many families during the summer. People get to know neighbors better and become close friends. Their children enjoy a healthy, safe environment while expanding their horizons. There is great social value especially for young parents that may not have young families in their immediate neighborhood. Even grandparents take pleasure in spending time with their grandchildren knowing they will be safe while enjoying a day of fun and sun. The water park helps to create a better sense of community where residents come to spend the day and not just a few hours.

The success of the water park can be attributed to two main groups. The hard working dedicated employees that take great pride in providing a top quality facility for the residents of Tinley Park are tremendous assets. The patrons who thoroughly enjoy a safe friendly environment with their neighbors are a large part of our success as well. The two groups depend on each other to continue the success of the water park.

When the referendum passed in 2000 we thought it helped to fill two needs, but it turns out it has done a lot more than that. The recreation center is booming with activity and White Water Canyon continues to be the center of summer fun. The water park has created lifelong learning experiences, brought the community closer together and developed future leaders through job training. Today it is the social center of Tinley Park and accomplishing a lot more than just a couple of needs.

By John Curran, Executive Director, Tinley Park-Park District

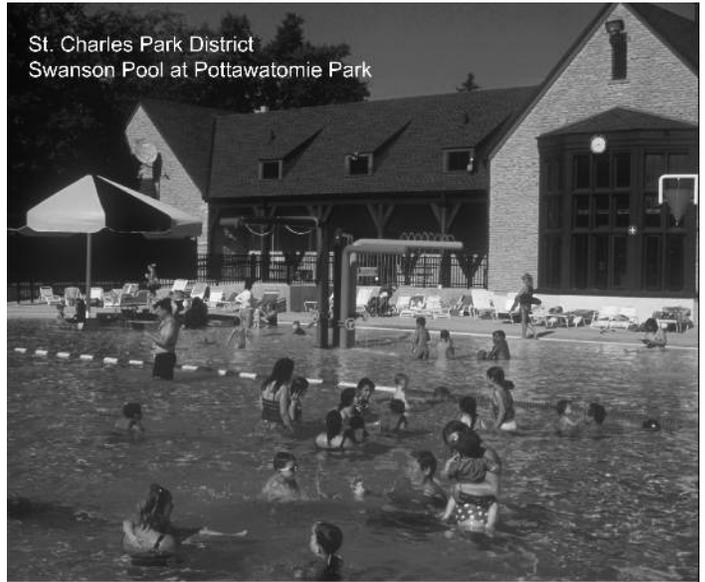


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The Gurnee Park District has been focused on aquatic instruction and water recreation for more than 40 years. In 1970, at Gowe Beach, the district offered a natural spring-fed lake and beachfront for learn-to-swim programs, summer swimming and canoeing activities. Then in 1988, an indoor pool addition to the local high school opened the doors to intergovernmental agreements expanding aquatic recreation year-round.

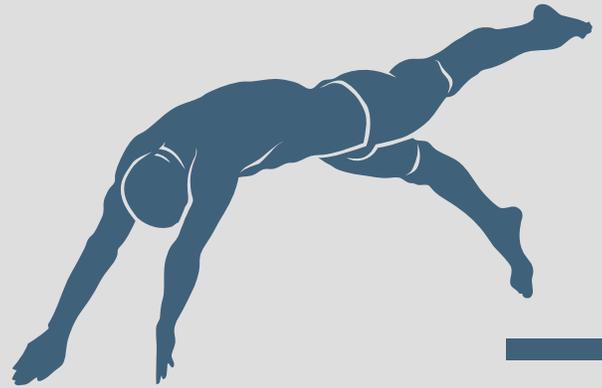
The Gurnee community saw a tremendous amount of growth and with it an increased need for aquatic facilities. In 2002, in cooperation with the Village of Gurnee, a 65,000 sq. ft., 1500 bather load facility was built with amenities that include seven slides, spray features, a free sprayground, two volleyball courts, an outdoor billiards table, birthday party area, The Cattail Cafe and Grill Concession Area, a 6-lane lap pool and zero-depth entry. It was at this facility that summer swim instruction soared with record participants. By this time, the district began to experience facility limitations with high school pool and water quality issues with Gowe Beach thus in need of alternative sites. Fortunately, a change in the special education district's needs presented the opportunity to lease their pool full-time where services are now offered seven days a week.

# Collaboration & Creativity:

## The Cornerstone of Gurnee Community Aquatics

Co-authored: **Jennifer Gilbert**, Marketing & Public Relations Manager &  
**Scott Crowe**, CPRP, Superintendent of Recreation (Former Aquatic Manager)

## **“All children should know how to swim, regardless of their swimming aspirations...”**



Today, Gurnee Park District aquatic programs serve over 4,400 participants annually at three different locations. Aquatic facilities and programs including parent-tot, toddlers, learn to swim (youth) classes, adult swim lessons, private swim lessons, semi-private swim lessons, three different formats of aquatic fitness classes, swim instructor internships, junior lifeguard class, springboard diving class and introduction to competitive swimming class, bring in over \$1.1 million dollars in revenue annually.

Such tremendous growth would not be possible without great staff, exceptional training and a variety of programs that keep residents engaged year after year. During peak seasons, the district now employs over 130 aquatic staff including lifeguards, pool attendants, customer service staff, aquatic fitness instructors, pool managers, customer service managers and swim instructors. Key staff includes Tim Beckmann, aquatic manager and Aaron Glickson, aquatic coordinator.

Gurnee Park District offers one of the only year round instructional programs in the area. Such continuity has proven to be advantageous for many reasons. One reason is that participants are able to progress through levels at a faster pace without the educational decline which occurs when instructional programs are only offered in the summer. The district is also able to retain staff year round which allows for more consistency in training and gives staff additional learning opportunities, professional growth and advancement. Because the district is not limited by seasons, there is more time inventory allowing for creative offerings such as private lessons during non-peak hours and swim instruction before summer camp.

Swimming is of course, a life skill. “All children should know how to swim, regardless of their swimming aspirations,” said Tim Beckmann, aquatic manager. Gurnee Park District offers scholarships to ensure that finances are not a factor in allowing children and adults to learn this life saving skill. Many children have gone far beyond the basics by advancing through our swim program and eventually feeding into the Blue Devil Swim Club, our local USA Swim Club that was recently

recognized as a Silver Medal Swim Club by USA Swimming which identifies them as a top 100 club in the country. Further, the Warren Township High School District 121 swim teams have also been very successful, placing 3rd at IHSA 2012 Boys Swimming Championship. Many of the high school swim team athletes started as park district participants. This coordination between recreation, competitive and high school swimming organizations has been a great benefit to the athletes in the Gurnee community.

Gurnee Park District's aquatic programs would not be successful without a stringent attention to safety. The district utilizes Ellis & Associates (E&A), an International lifeguard training organization to provide training, resources and auditing services for swimming facilities around the world. As part of the E&A Comprehensive Aquatic Risk Management Program, five unannounced audits are given to each client facility throughout the year to evaluate the effectiveness of training, supervision, and record-keeping as part of the audit process. In 2012 the Gurnee Park District lifeguards were awarded the prestigious Platinum International Safety Award. This achievement represents the highest accomplishment an organization can receive from E&A. Only 10% of all E&A clients worldwide receive this award. The Gurnee Park District staff has received this award seven times since 2002. The district also employs a shadowing process with our newest lifeguards to extend their training beyond the lifeguard class to make sure all lifeguards are truly ready for the demands of each facility they may supervise.

The district does not rest on its laurels when it comes to advancements in aquatics management. Whether its being one of the first districts to be Virginia Graeme Baker-compliant, adding lift chairs to meet upcoming changes in ADA standards or expanding programs like the Jr. Lifeguard Academy, the district stays on top of changes to legislation and advancements in the industry.

It's hard to say what is on the horizon for Gurnee Park District Aquatics, but one thing is certain, no matter what needs arise in the community, collaboration and creativity will be at the cornerstone.



*Batavia's*

**AQUATIC FACILITY**

STEEPED IN

**HISTORY**

BY KARI MILLER

CPRP, BATAVIA PARK DISTRICT

2013

The Hall Quarry Beach in Batavia, IL, is often referred to as a hidden gem. Tucked down in a large, natural area, next to the Fox River, you'd think you had just been whisked away to a private oasis. Far from the sights and sounds of a city with nearly 30,000 people, you'll find the 60,000 square foot facility owned by the Batavia Park District.

At first glance, you'd notice the sandy beach, zero depth entry, diving towers and concrete islands. But you'd barely scratch the surface of the history of this unique aquatic facility. In 1842, Batavia earned the name "Rock City" after a limestone quarry was opened on the west side of the town. By 1860, nine quarries were in operation. One of those quarries was originally purchased by Lawrence P. Barker and James C. Derby and sat on an acre of property along the Fox River. More than 150 men mined the quarry until it was so wide and deep that water began seeping into the floor of the site. According to Carla Hill, Director of the Batavia Depot Museum, six ponds were then formed. "The ponds became known as 'old swimming holes' and boys particularly would have fun in the summer, swimming – illegally – in the ponds," Hill said.



Then in 1871, tragedy struck Chicago. Fire spread throughout the city for nearly a day and a half, destroying one third of homes and leveling nearly four square miles. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the City of Chicago began rebuilding and they turned to the Batavia quarries for help. Limestone from the quarries was shipped to Chicago for the reconstruction.

The quarry owned and operated by Barker and Derby was eventually purchased in 1920 by a man named, quite fittingly, Frederick Beach. Beach donated the quarry property to the Batavia Township. The Township then created one swimming area from the six ponds and named it the Frederick H. Beach Park and Pool. When the Batavia Park District formed in 1969, the property was transferred to the district's jurisdiction.

In 1992, the Batavia Park District gave the facility a much-needed face lift. "The facility was demolished, a sand bottom was added and several buildings including the guard house and bath houses were built," said Director of Planning and Development Jim Eby. "Expansive changes were made and crews were able to work all winter long to complete the project." On opening day in June 1993, the facility was dedicated and renamed "Harold Hall Quarry Beach" in honor of park board commissioner Harold "Bosco" Hall. Several original buildings still remain on site that were part of the Workers Progress Administration projects of 1934.

The Hall Quarry Beach, or "the Quarry" as it's referred to by locals, encountered problems in 2004 when a dam was removed from the adjacent Fox River. The river levels dropped significantly, causing water to seep through the limestone walls of the former quarry and we began losing water at a devastating pace.

Nearly 250,000 gallons of water were leaking out of the Quarry daily into the Fox River. A well was dug to try to replenish the water and keep it at safe swimming levels but then the issue was water temperature. The well was pumping bone-chilling, 55 degree water into the Quarry, and Mother Nature could only do so much to heat the water. The average water temperature over the next few summers was approximately 65 degrees.



The frigid water temperatures drastically began affecting attendance numbers. In 2006, nearly 40,000 patrons visited the Quarry, and by 2009, just 20,000 visitors came through. It was clear something had to be done, and the district began researching ways to fix the problem. By the end of the summer of 2010, the community had spoken loud and clear. The Hall Quarry Beach was a gem, and residents wanted it saved.

"After spending much of the summer engaging the residents and asking the tough questions, we reached a community resolution to make the necessary repairs to Hall Quarry Beach to not only keep it open, but to improve and preserve the integrity of the historic experience," said Executive Director Allison Niemela.

The following January, the district contacted consulting firms in an effort to create a solution that would fix the leak and solve the issue of the frigid water temperatures. After much research, a liner system was developed to cover the bottom of the Quarry, and renovation began in fall of 2011 which stopped water from leaking out.

When the Quarry opened its doors in June 2012 after the renovation was complete, staff had their fingers crossed. Mother Nature provided a warm summer, and the water temperature soared to 80 degrees. Patrons flocked to the Quarry to experience the renovated facility. Season pass sales rose by 70% over the previous year, proving that patrons were ready and willing to give the Quarry another shot. "Having warmer water definitely brings more patrons," said Eby, "It's a very important factor for people. This is a natural body of water, not a typical clear-bottom pool. But that's what people love about it. It's unique and truly a hidden gem in the community."

Batavia Park District staff was ecstatic to see the positive results following the extensive renovation. Attendance numbers soared, and a steady stream of eager swimmers made their way to the Quarry. "People started spreading the word about the warmer water and their positive experience, and we began seeing more and more people come through," said Facility Manager Amber Smith, "There were many days that we were at capacity with 1500 people."

Today, the Quarry features a sandy beach, zero-depth entry, drop slide, kid's flume, diving towers, lap swim area, sand volleyball courts, concession stand and large picnic area. It's a hidden gem that truly provides a unique experience for visitors.



OAK BROOK PARK DISTRICT:

Providing the  
**VERY BEST**  
in Aquatic Recreational Opportunities

By: **Jessica Cannaday**, Marketing Manager, Oak Brook Park District

The Oak Brook Park District Family Aquatic Center is a beautiful and elite ADA accessible indoor facility that offers some of the best and most unique aquatic programming in the nation. The Family Aquatic Center is home to Fluid Running®, the only certified deep water running program in the United States. The Family Aquatic Center also offers a variety of arthritis friendly fitness classes, one-of-a-kind special events such as Cosmic Swim, The Pumpkin Dive and some of the best introductory swim instruction available.



### Planning for Success

The wide range of aquatic opportunities currently available in Oak Brook is part of a vision that began early in 1997 when a group of residents expressed interest in the development of an aquatic facility. The Oak Brook Park District then formed the Aquatic Center Advisory Committee; established to oversee the planning stages of the proposed facility. The committee was governed by three guiding plan principles: design the facility for the primary use of Oak Brook residents, design the facility to be able to at least break-even financially and implement high quality materials into an architectural style in-line with the current Family Recreation Center.

The committee took great care to ensure that the needs of our unique community were being met and that the facility would not be in direct competition with the Village's Bath and Tennis Center. The design that was approved by the Oak Brook Park District Board of Commissioners included an indoor six lane lap pool, 105 foot leisure pool with zero depth entry, a 10 person spa, locker rooms and a concession area. The state-of-the-art indoor Family Aquatic Center opened on June 28, 1999.

By 2000, the board realized a demand for a wider scope of services. As such, the splash pad project came to fruition in 2004, when the Oak Brook Park District was awarded an OSLAD Grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Construction began in late 2004 and the park district unveiled the new amenity with its interactive water features and porous play-friendly surface in June of 2005.

### If You Build It You Have To Manage It

The Aquatic Center Advisory Committee's careful planning and diligent involvement within the community 16 years ago has been intrinsic to the facility's success today. The facility immediately earned a strong reputation for its cleanliness, customer service, swimming lessons and even as a birthday party destination. The Family Aquatic Center is run on two separate systems, allowing the park district to maintain different temperatures in the pools enabling the agency to effectively accommodate five separate target markets: young swim students, senior water aerobics participants, recreational users, lap swimmers and competitive/fitness swimmers.

The Aquatic Center Advisory Committee's careful planning and diligent involvement within the community 16 years ago has been intrinsic to the facility's success today.

The park district quickly realized that the management, not just the facility, was the key to financial success. In 2008, the park district brought on a management team that was able to truly capitalize on the opportunities and services the facility could offer and overcome an \$186,000 deficit in just three years. The team began by reorganizing the swimming lesson program in order to accommodate more students and improve the registration process. In 2007, the park district recorded 3095 kids registered for lessons and by 2012 that number had skyrocketed to 6059. This success can be attributed to an ideal formula of management, evaluation and facility amenities.

Staff streamlined the swim lesson program to feature Parent/Infant classes, Parent/Tot classes and "Wave A" (levels 1-3) and "Wave B" (levels 4-6) skill groups instead of individual levels. This allows instructors to independently move students from one class to another within the waves, alleviating registration issues and increasing the efficiency of learning in each class. The new structure also allows parents with children at different ages and skill levels to enroll in classes at the same time.

The immense popularity of our Parent/Infant and Parent/Tot introductory classes attracts new parents and students to the Oak Brook Park District swim program at a very early age and allows staff to develop these families into loyal, repeat customers. Staff attributes the popularity of these classes to the fact that they are held in the zero depth and leisure pool, which maintains an 85-87 degree temperature, keeping the children warmer longer and making the experience more enjoyable for everyone. Aqua therapy and water aerobics classes are also conducted in the warmer leisure lane, creating a comfortable and therapeutic environment for our senior swimmers.

In 2008, the management team decided to incorporate water aerobics classes as an aquatic membership benefit. At the time, the decision seemed a risky one, since the water aerobics classes provided a steady revenue stream, independent of membership revenue. However, since 2008, the Oak Brook Park District has seen the number of aquatic members increase 48% and a dramatic reduction in administrative time spent on registration and participant check-in.

### Getting the Family Aquatic Center on the Map

The reputation of the Oak Brook Park District's Family Aquatic Center has been catapulted by the success of its competitive and aquatic fitness programs. The development of a successful swim team program and the introduction of Fluid Running® have all helped put this little facility on the map. The Oak Brook Park District Stars Swim Team is now one of the most popular in DuPage County. Its success has triggered the development of the Starfish Pre-Swim Team feeder program and a high-demand Intro to Competitive Swimming program.

In 2010, staff was approached by one of their regular swimmers, Jennifer Conroyd. Jennifer, an avid marathoner, ironman and triathlete, had recently overcome an injury that threatened to jeopardize her running career by training in the water at the Family Aquatic Center. Her experience inspired her to travel to Canada and become a certified deep water running instructor and coach, and now she teaches Fluid Running® in Oak Brook. Jennifer compares her Fluid Running® class to a spin class; it's choreographed to music with interval sets that keep you in the cardio training zone. The program is suitable for people of all fitness and skill levels and even caters to injured athletes and individuals managing arthritis pain. In an effort to make this amazing fitness opportunity more widely available, Fluid Running® and the Oak Brook Park District plan on launching a certification program for instructors and trainers by the Fall of 2013. The Oak Brook Park District will always strive to provide the very best in park and recreational opportunities, facilities and open lands for our community.

# Haylie's Certified Playground Mulch



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## PEOPLE & PLACES



### Glencoe Park District Welcomes New Executive Director

The Glencoe Park District is pleased to announce that **Lisa Sheppard** has been hired as the new executive director. With a comprehensive professional background and positive energy, she is a great addition to the park district family.

Lisa comes to Glencoe with over 20 years of experience in the field of parks and recreation. She holds a bachelor's degree in recreation

management from Carthage College. Her work resume is extensive, with experience in all major disciplines of the district including recreation, facility and parks management, public relations, marketing and fiscal management. Lisa spent the past 15 years as superintendent of recreation at the Gurnee Park District. In addition to her broad work experience, Lisa is an active professional in the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA).



### PPD Executive Director Honored, Administration Building Renamed

The Peoria Park District Board of Trustees recently honored **Bonnie W. Noble**, executive director of parks and recreation, for 40 years of dedicated service to the district. Noble served first as an elected board member from 1973 to 1979, then as president of the park board from 1979 to 1991. She

was appointed to her current position as executive director of parks and recreation in 1992.

Under Noble's leadership, the Peoria Park District has been awarded the National Gold Medal Award three times, has been a Gold Medal finalist nine times and the park district was one of the first accredited as an Illinois Distinguished Park District by IAPD/IPRA.

In appreciation of Noble's total commitment, dedication and leadership, the Peoria Park District Board of Trustees named the park district's administration building at Lakeview Park the Bonnie W. Noble Center for Park District Administration.



### Wood Dale Park District Announces New Executive Director

**Matthew Ellmann** has been named executive director of the Wood Dale Park District. As executive director, Matthew will lead the agency through strategic planning for the future while managing the day to day operations. Most recently, Matthew was the superintendent of recreation with the Park District of Oak Park serving in that capacity for over 8 years and leading the

reorganization process of the recreation department. Prior to Oak Park, Matt was the executive director of the Park District of LaGrange and before that, the Warrenville Park District. Matt received his bachelor's degree from George Williams College in leisure education recreation administration. Matt is passionate about people and the profession.



### Kuhs Chosen to Head Mt. Prospect Park District

**Greg Kuhs** has been named as the new executive director of Mt. Prospect Park District. Kuhs had previously served as superintendent of recreation for the Prospect Heights, Addison and Deerfield Park Districts as well as the director of parks and recreation for the North Berwyn and Salt Creek Park Districts. Most recently he

was executive director of Wood Dale Park District.

Kuhs received an MBA from Webster University in St. Louis and bachelors in recreation administration from University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse. He has served in many capacities in the recreation industry. He is also a certified park and recreation professional, a member of the National Recreation and Park Association, a member of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association and a graduate of their Professional Development School.



### New Director of Recreation at Calumet Park Recreation Department

**Jonathan Shaw** has been appointed to the position of director of recreation for the Calumet Park Recreation Department. Jonathan began working for the department in 2007, specializing in outdoor maintenance and gradually rising to the rank of recreation supervisor in 2010. From that point on, Jonathan began to

understand and appreciate the positive effects the parks and recreation experience had upon the participants of the department's programs and the people of Calumet Park. As director, Jonathan will lead the department with policy construction, youth development, and the overhaul of the department's programming and operations. Jonathan is an active member of organizations such as NRPA, IPRA, SSPRPA, and is currently on track to attain his CPRP certification in the summer of 2014.



### Head of McHenry County Conservation District Elected Vice Chair of Regional Conservation Alliance

Chicago, IL—The Chicago Wilderness alliance announced today that **Elizabeth S. Kessler**, executive director of the McHenry County Conservation District, has been elected as its new vice chair. Chicago

Wilderness is a regional alliance of more than 300 organizations working to protect land, water and wildlife in our region.

In her role as vice chair, Kessler will work with conservation, government and corporate leaders to develop and guide regional conservation initiatives. She has been active in the Chicago Wilderness alliance since 2006.

Elizabeth is currently a member of the American Academy for Park & Recreation Administrators and Ex-Officio Director of the McHenry County Conservation Foundation. Kessler holds an MBA with distinction from the Keller Graduate School of Management and is a certified park and recreation professional.



### St Charles Park District Honors Former Commissioner John "Jack" Kerr

**Jack Kerr**, who passed away on July 2, 2012, had been very involved in the Fox Valley with his wife of 52 years, Mary Neder Kerr. For Jack's 25 years of service and dedication to the park district, the park board will commemorate the walkway along the shores of the Fox River by the historic pavilion in Pottawatomie Park to be named the John "Jack" Kerr Walkway.

From 1987 to 2012, Jack served in many capacities on the park board including president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Much was accomplished during Jack's tenure. Jack was an advocate for the acquisition of open space, improvement to existing facilities and development of new properties. Jack's passion was aquatics, specifically the renovation of the 70-year-old Swanson Pool in Pottawatomie Park.



### Posen Park District Hires New Director of Parks and Recreation

Posen Park District Board President Al Chmielak has announced that **T.J. Whitcomb** was hired as director of parks and recreation for the district. Mr. Whitcomb had served for the previous four years as a member of the district's board of

commissioners. He also has experience working with children as a substitute teacher and paraprofessional with Bremen High School District 228. Mr. Whitcomb holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Lewis University in Romeoville Illinois with a focus in history and an endorsement as a learning and behavior specialist.

## Want to Read More?

Keep up with the latest milestones, new hires, promotions and award winners in the Illinois park and recreation industry online. Visit our website, [www.ilparks.org](http://www.ilparks.org), and click on the Publications tab on the left. Select IP&R Magazine and then People and Places.

## Want to submit news from your agency for People & Places?

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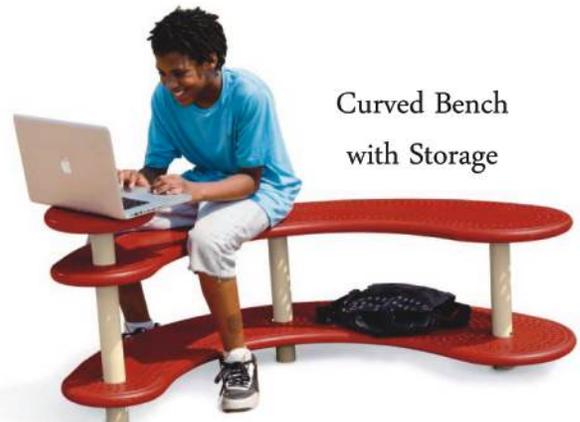
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