

2008 NACPRO Award Program

NACPRO announced its 2008 awards in Kansas City, MO on July 14th.

Outstanding Public Official

This Award is presented to a nominated, elected or appointed federal, state, or local official (including commissioner or board member) who has contributed significantly to the benefit of county level parks, recreation, leisure services and open space programs.



Recipient: United States Senator Mary Landrieu, Louisiana

Nominated by: Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge

United States Senator Mary Landrieu has been an advocate of parks for many years, helping to ensure that federal funds are leveraged for enhanced quality of life for all citizens.

In Louisiana, Senator Landrieu championed efforts to secure more than \$8.6 million to rebuild New Orleans City Park in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In addition, she supported the City of Westwego's Wetland Harbor Activity and Recreational Facility, the effort to expand the Jean Lafitte National

Historical Park and Preserve, the designation of the Atchafalaya Basin as a National Heritage Area and authorized \$10 million in federal funds and the establishment of a new down-town park in Baton Rouge.

Nationally, Senator Landrieu has sponsored the Americans Outdoors Act and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program. Senator Landrieu of New Orleans exemplifies a true public servant, striving to forge partnerships that encourage local, parish, state and federal parties to work together to move projects forward. She truly embodies the spirit of this award.

Lifetime Award

The lifetime award recognizes professionals who are retiring or leaving county level park service. This year, we have two lifetime awards and two individuals to recognize for a lifetime of service to parks and recreation.



Recipient: Ron Benson, Director of Douglas County Parks, Trails, and Building Grounds
Ron was nominated by Douglas County Parks, Trails and Building Grounds in Castle Rock, Colorado where he just recently retired after 40 years of service in the Parks and Recreation profession.

Over the years, Ron has been actively involved in Colorado Parks and Recreation Association, NACPRO, and NRPA and has served on boards of several other park and civic organizations.

During his tenure as a Parks and Recreation professional, Ron has had a profound influence on both the profession and perhaps most importantly, on the numerous individuals that he has mentored, challenged, guided and led.

Recipient: Robert G. Straub



Bob recently retired from the Maui County Department of Parks and Recreation. His involvement with the County of Maui started as a volunteer with an interest in making a difference in the lives of both residents and tourists. As the Special Events Specialist/Park Enforcement, Bob has made many major contributions.

While working with the County of Maui, Bob brought professionalism and consistency to the department. He is especially responsible for establishing excellent working relationships with various agencies and departments and worked hard to create an efficient permitting process for the large number of special events that regularly take place in the parks. He was also responsible for the implementation and the expansion of the Park Ranger program which was established several years ago under his leadership.

In addition to his position with the county, Bob also served as the Hawaii State Director

of the United State Specialty Sports Association. Since 1989, Bob has served in various capacities including 32 years as a softball umpire and 27 years as a basketball official. In March 2002, he was inducted in the New England USSSA Hall of Fame.

Bob is also known for his role as Santa Claus, where he delighted in bringing Christmas cheer to the young and old. In his retirement, he hopes to devote more time to this role as well as to training softball officials and managing his restaurant in Arizona, the spring training site for several Major League Baseball teams.

Fellow Award

The NACPRO Fellow Award recognizes exemplary professionals who are currently employed in the county level park and recreation field. Each year, just one individual is selected to receive this award.

Recipient: James McCarthy, Department Facility Planner for the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation-North Agency.

In his 27-year career, Jim has been Trails



Coordinator, Forest Ranger, Park Maintenance Technician, Park Planner and Associate Landscape Architect, as well as a dedicated volunteer and park/trail/open space advocate. Throughout his career, Jim McCarthy has

defended park standards and integrity, protected sensitive and dwindling resources and built new and improved park facilities with dedication and passion.

Jim has been advocated for public safety, whether that means promoting the need for more patrolling of parks, helping to protect park facilities, or conducting programs on safety at trails, lakes and community and regional facilities.

In addition to his many professional contributions, Jim and his wife operated and fund a domestic animal rescue that has saved and placed more than 250 animals.

Outstanding Contributor Award

The outstanding contributor Award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution of land or fiscal resources to county parks and recreation.

Recipient: Jerold Binkley

Jerold was nominated by Shawnee County Parks and Recreation in Kansas where he has been extraordinarily generous with his time, talent and resources since 1989.

Known for his love of flowers and talent for gardening, Jerold routinely spends several days a week at Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee, planting, weeding, watering and doing whatever need to be done. For 20 years, Jerold has opened up his home garden to thousands of local and out-of-town visitors, who come to view "Tulip Time," an event rated as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for group travel in 2007. "Tulip Time" provides a wonderful opportunity for visitors to stroll along winding paths containing over 50,000 blooming tulips and daffodils, with backdrops of dozens of flowering trees, vast varieties of shrubs and hundreds of perennials.

In addition, Jerold Binkley's involvement with the Topeka Beautification Association and "Tulip Time" has generated needed funds for Shawnee County Parks and Recreation and provided for the development of additional gardens at Lake Shawnee.

Outstanding Volunteer Award

The outstanding volunteer award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution of personal time and talent to county parks and recreation.



Recipient: Louie Gradias

Louie Gradias has worked in a voluntary capacity for Yuma County, Arizona for more than 50 years in the small community of Gadsden. His work of a lifetime has been to ensure that Gadsden Park, a much loved park and gathering place, has continued to be a valued resource in his community.

From the time he was young when he worked with his parents to clear the land for the park, Louie has been involved with this local resource. Over the years, he has been responsible for daily operations and maintenance, reservations, repair, and programming. For 17 years, Louie operated a local Little League, maintaining the fields, coaching teams and serving as umpire for many of the games.

In 2003, when the local school district determined that it was no longer feasible to operate the park, Louie Gradias led the effort to form a non-profit organization in order to assume responsibility for the park.

Today, the park serves 1,400 to 2,000 visitors annually through its reservation system, and serves an additional 15 to 20 people a day for drop-in activities. The park is the primary meeting place for community forums and events. All this is accomplished on just \$1900 annually.

2008 NACPRO Excellence in Parks Awards

The NACPRO awards program is intended to recognize and honor excellence in county park and recreation endeavors throughout the nation and to share honoree best practice ideas with other agencies.

NACPRO recognizes member agencies for successful park and recreation facilities, programs, environmental/conservation initiatives, historical/cultural projects, and re-moving barrier initiatives.

Awards are categorized into four major groups: Individual; Program; Areas and Facilities; and, 4) Special. The Summer '08 issue of NACPRO News highlighted Excellence in Parks winners in the categories recognizing individual persons. This issue will report on agencies receiving NACPRO Excellence Awards.

NACPRO encourages interested readers to learn more about these projects by contacting the winning agencies.

PROGRAM AWARDS:

Park and Recreation Program Awards: These awards are presented to recognize a county park and recreation agency that has provided a unique or exceptional program, activity, or event which provides an outstanding example that other agencies could adopt or emulate. Winners for 2008 are:

Maui Baseball Expo

Maui Department of Parks and Recreation in Hawaii.

Living on an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, over 2500 miles from the nearest stadium that is home to a Major League Baseball Team, the youth of Maui rarely have the opportunity to experience professional baseball. The Maui Baseball Expo was designed to fill this

need by providing clinics, events, programs, and facility improvement initiatives.



For three years, this event has provided free high-quality baseball instruction and evaluation to youth ballplayers and youth coaches. Major league notables, such as LA Dodger Tommy Lasorda, and Shane "Flying Hawaiian" Victorino of the Philadelphia Phillies, make special guest appearances.

Each year the event is made possible through generous support and donations from Major League Baseball teams, business and organizations. Panda Express provides all the participants, parents, coaches scouts, instructors and spectators with complimentary meals.

The Maui Baseball Expo provides to the youth of Maui an exceptional experience. Now in its third year, the program has expanded to a three day format and includes instructional clinics, a coaches symposium, and a high school clinic that provides the opportunity for players to demonstrate their talents for pro coaches and scouts.

Peer Mediation James City County Parks and Recreation in Virginia

The Peer Mediation Program is a partnership between James City County Parks and Recreation and

the Virginia Cooperative Extension/4H Youth Development Program. The program is designed for 6th through 12th grade youth, with the goal to teach them to peacefully resolve disputes through a variety of techniques. The need for the program grew through community concerns when Juvenile Justice statistics found assault to be the leading offense in juvenile intake complaints. A 14-hour course was developed and offered twice annually at the local 4-H center with the goal to assist the youth of the community to become community peacemakers.



In 2007, approximately 150 participants took advantage of the training, becoming certified youth mediators. Results of the program indicate an increased knowledge of how to deal with conflict and how to help others deal with conflict. In addition, elementary school children have completed similar "Peace Corner" training. As a result of both trainings, youth have noted substantial improvements in leadership skills, mutual respect, and decision making abilities that encourage their success as current and future leaders in their schools and communities.

Healthy Trails County of Santa Clara, California

Healthy Trails: Your Path to Fitness, Fun and Adventure, is a free fitness challenge for people of all ages and skill levels. The program

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challenges people to walk, roll, ride or run at least 5 of the 21 featured Santa Clara County Park trails in a nine-month period. Participants receive gifts upon registering for and completion of the program. Individuals can participate independently but are also encouraged to join monthly outings geared to a wide variety of interests.



The overall goal of the program is to encourage participants to be physically active, connect with nature and improve nutritional habits. The program directly tackles "Nature Deficient Disorder," obesity, and chronic diseases such as Type II diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, and other life-threatening conditions. The program is advertised county wide with marketing efforts targeting specific populations in order to broaden participation.

Aquatic Adventure Camp

Los Angeles County, California

This program is a 10-day youth camp designed and conducted as an inter-agency effort between Los Angeles County, Castaic Lake Regional Park, Placerita Canyon Na-



ture Center and California State University Northridge. The camp was designed to improve swimming proficiency, promote water safety, and introduce youth to the natural world.

The camp is free and open to any youth with proficiency in County administered swimming tests. The camp includes pool and lake swimming, snorkeling lessons, kayaking, water safety, canoeing, sailing water conservation, ecology and wildlife preservation. At the end of the camp, campers are joined by their families for an overnight camping experience complete with stargazing.

Along with improved aquatics and water safety skills, the campers and their families also gained increased knowledge and heightened awareness of their natural surroundings and a new-found pride in their accomplishments. Participant response in 2007 was overwhelmingly positive, and four additional camps were held this past summer.

AREAS AND FACILITIES AWARDS:

The Areas and Facilities awards are presented to recognize and honor excellence in recreation and park facilities; to focus national attention (both public and professional) on the very best of facility design; to encourage outstanding efforts in planning, design, construction, and benefits to the community; and to be a resource of information for the highest quality of facility development. Winners for 2008 are:

Glen Allen Stadium at RF&P Park Henrico (VA) Division of Recreation and Parks

The \$3.8 million project was funded by citizens of Henrico County as part of a 2005 bond referendum. Work commenced in 2005 and was

completed in May 2007. The Stadium was constructed in RF&P Park on land that was donated by and is named for the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad.



The stadium was designed to evoke the feeling of an intimate mid-twentieth century ball park. The architectural theme, based on railroad stations of this period, was chosen to expand the existing structures at the park that included three original RF&P railroad cars. These three cars were integrated into the design of the stadium that looks like a railroad station with covered platforms.

Originally designed to attract the 2007 Babe Ruth World Series for youth aged 12 to 14 years, this stadium is also used for many local, regional and state tournaments. The Glen Allen Youth Athletic Association uses it as their home field.

Comparable to a college or minor league venue, the stadium has been enthusiastically received by users and spectators from across the country.

Claude Moore Recreation Center Loudoun County, Virginia

Opened in April of 2007, the Claude Moore Recreation Center is a state-of-the-art recreation center located in Loudoun County, Virginia. Spanning over 91,000 square feet, the Center is outfitted with a full size gym, elevated running track, climbing wall, weight ma-

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chines, teen room, kids leisure pool and water slide. The crown jewel of the center is the 50-meter competitive training swimming pool.



The Center features a “farmacular” architecture that reflects the historic farm park setting. Organized as a farm compound of simple connected structures, the traditional barn and silo profile serves as the entry marker for the complex. Smaller “out-buildings” for the gym, community rooms, teen and child-care areas extend out from the central lobby. Bold reds and yellow exteriors help differentiate the structures while still adding to the “community farmstead” residential/agricultural feel.

The facility is open to the general public, seven days a week and offers an array of admission packages. The intent of this recreation facility is to serve individuals, families and groups including school and community organizations, seniors and persons with disabilities, providing a safe and inspiring environment where Loudoun County residents can go for fun and fitness year round.



Central Broward Regional Park Broward County (FL) Parks and Recreation Division

This 110-acre park, located in the Broward County, Florida, is the first county regional park to be funded through the Broward County Com-

mission’s 2000 Safe Parks and Land Preservation Bond Referendum program. Ground was broken for the park in June 2005 and the park opened in November 2007

The site is the only park in the region capable of hosting major cricket competitions. It features a circular lighted multipurpose main structure with 5,000 covered seats and additional seating for 15,000. This event site has already hosted sporting competitions and is expected to host concerts and many other special events.



The complex also includes lighted soccer/football fields (that can also be used as cricket fields), netball, tennis and basketball courts. An aquatics complex, called the “Tropical Splash”, includes water playgrounds, an instructional pool, and boat rentals. In addition, the site includes several picnic shelters and pavilions, a nature trail and two covered playgrounds.

Goodan Ranch Interpretive Center

County of San Diego (CA) Department of Parks and Recreation

In 2003, wildfires destroyed San Diego County’s Goodan Ranch Open Space Preserve, including an historic ranch house, milking barn and several other structures. In the two years that followed, the county worked closely with local cities, the California Department of Fish and Game, and local community groups to design and rebuild facilities at the site. In 2006, a \$1.5 million

environmentally friendly center was funded by County fire insurance. The project was completed in the summer of 2007.



The new center includes offices and community meeting space as well as an exhibit room. The skeleton of the original ranch house remains onsite, and it’s history and the fire are interpreted through signage.

The new building, designed to blend into the historic Goodan Ranch setting, incorporated many “green” building materials into the construction including dual pane windows and doors, low energy HVAC system, and a photovoltaic panel system that exceeds California’s energy code. Low flow toilets and drought tolerant native plants greatly minimize water needs.

By rebuilding smarter and utilizing green technology, the San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation is a leader in sustainable design and resource conservation. The project has won several green building awards and is expected to be the first County building certified under the US Green Building Council’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program.

Waiehu Golf Course Maintenance Building County of Maui (HI) Department of Parks

This brand new Operational Support Facility provides a much needed single consolidated center for the Waiehu Golf Course. Prior

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to its development, course maintenance took place out of two inadequate maintenance buildings and a maintenance tent.



The construction of the new facility commenced in August 2006 and was completed in spring 2008.

Design and construction cost for the project was \$3.1 million, including the cost of demolishing three existing maintenance structures.

The new facility consists of a single-story structure with 8,000 square feet. It includes offices, storage, service and storage bays, covered service area, restrooms with shower facilities, and utility rooms. Other related improvements include widening the existing service road, vehicle pull over area, and asphalt concrete paving adjacent to the new building.

George Washington Carver School

Loudoun County, Virginia

This Historical/Cultural Facility Award is awarded to a unique facility development dedicated to historical or cultural preservation, recreation, and/or interpretation.



Originally opened in 1948 as the first modern elementary school for African Americans in Loudoun County, the school was closed in 1968. In 2000-2001, a feasibility

study was completed and a bond referendum was passed that made it possible to restore the school for use as a senior center, adult day care center on weekdays and general community center on weekends.

Construction began in August 2005. The 14,500 square foot facility was completed in August 2007 for a total cost of \$6.9 million. With a goal to accommodate new uses within the existing structure, much of the original woodwork, including doors and hardwood floors, was refinished or reused in other areas of the facility. Modern enhancements compliment the original character of the building.

The restoration of historic Carver Center into a modern facility serving seniors and the general community is a model for our industry and represents the realization of the vision held by early supporters of a center that honors the past, celebrates the present and embraces the future.



SPECIAL AWARDS

The next three awards fall under the Special Award Category. The first of these awards is the Environmental/Conservation Award. It is presented each year to recognize an exceptional effort to reclaim, restore, preserve, acquire, or develop unique and natural areas and programs.

Grasslands and Creek Protection and Restoration Project County of San Diego (CA) Department of Parks and Recreation

This project is a collaborative effort to preserve the rural character of the town of Ramona in San Diego

County. Project efforts included protection of open space, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitat, and expansion of the community trails network. The project was initiated in June 2004 and completed in March 2007.



The Ramona Grasslands Preserve supports a diversity of habitat types, including native and non-native grasslands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodlands, as well as others. To protect this habitat and associated sensitive species, the County acquired 420 acres and anticipated acquiring approximately 3,000 additional acres in the summer of 2008. The Preserve will be open to the public for trail use, including hiking, biking, and equestrian, and will also include interpretive programs.



Directives for the project establish biological, water quality and cultural goals to maintain and restore the grasslands. Innovative and creative management approaches include the use of livestock grazing to open up habitat, control non-native invasive plant species, reduce thatch buildup, and increase water availability in vernal pools.

Urban Reforestation Project

Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation

This project has planted more than 9,000 trees and 7,000 shrubs in the County of Los Angeles as part of an

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environmental conservation requirement of a California State Bond grant. The \$3.7 million grant required the planting of mature landscape material and native plant material whenever possible.



In order to accomplish this massive project, the County partnered with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC). The LACC is the largest conservation corps in the country giving at-risk youth an opportunity to gain valuable skills and to graduate from high school. Several hundred at-risk youth participated in the program, providing them with unique opportunities that were often unavailable to them before this project.

The project also benefited the environment. According to the USDA, 100 trees annually remove 53 tons of carbon dioxide and 430 pounds of other pollutants from the air. Additionally, the same number of trees catch 139,000 gallons of rainwater each year, reducing runoff. Clearly, the benefits of this project are tremendous.

All People's Life Center Hillsborough County (FL) Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department

The All People's Life Center is home to many programs for persons of all abilities. Located near the geographic center of Hillsborough County for easy access by all participants, the 45,000 square foot

building includes a gymnasium, class rooms, fitness center, locker/shower rooms, conference room, and office space. Amenities also include a fully accessible fitness course and playground.

Specific inclusion programs at the Center include basketball, dance and karate. In addition, The All People's Life Center provides a much needed home to the Blaze Sports program for physically disabled athletes. Blaze Sports Tampa was founded in 2002 as one of the 10 charter clubs in the United States with a mission to maximize the potential of children with physical disabilities through sports.



The total cost of the Center was \$7.2 million, including planning, design, and construction. Construction began in October 2005 and the facility opened in March 2007.

Buddy Ball James City County (VA) Parks and Recreation



Buddy Ball was designed for special needs boys and girls, aged 5-21, who love baseball. The program is offered in partnership with the

Williamsburg Youth Baseball League and is a unique public/private partnership that maximizes resources to positively change the community.



Buddy Ball breaks down barriers by offering youth with special needs an opportunity to play sports within their own community. The program was initiated by the parents of children with disabilities. James City County Parks and Recreation Department hired a professional Inclusion Coordinator to assess the needs of the players and to train the "Buddy" volunteers who work with each individual child. The County provided facilities for the games and the Williamsburg Youth Baseball League provided uniforms, coaches and scheduled the games.

One pleased parent commented, "our kids are so accustomed to having negative experiences in group activities that they almost never sign up for things, but now they are signing up for Buddy Ball. They see how much fun the players have and how flexible we are to adapt to the needs of different players."

Oak Ecosystems—A Vanishing Legacy

McHenry County (IL) Conservation District

The 2008 award for planning recognizes a two-year watershed study, utilizing GIS mapping, to demonstrate the dramatic loss of oaks from the time of settlement to 2005. This data mapping showed not only where oak remnants were lost to tree removal, but also illustrated

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where residential development had fragmented oak remnants beyond their ability to maintain as functioning natural communities.

The stark realities associated with oak loss revealed by the study have spurred a remarkable series of efforts by local agencies, volunteers and non-governmental organizations to arrest and reverse the decline.



Local county legislators passed a new zoning initiative that mandates conservation development and the Quercus Project brought together public, private and



non-profit entities to develop solutions for long-term oak preservation. These efforts will help to ensure the longevity of oak ecosystems in McHenry County.

THANKS!

We would thank this year's award program sponsors, including:

Biological Mediation Systems, Inc., or BMS, who provides the Parks and Recreation profession with systems and buildings to meet outdoor restroom needs;

Pilot Rock, providing landscaping equipment products wherever people gather to enjoy the outdoors; and,

TrafficGuard, specializing in the manufacture of top-of-the-line manually operated removable and collapsible vehicle access control systems.

Make a Park Excellence Nomination in 2009



AWARD CATEGORIES:

Individual Awards

Outstanding Public Official is presented to an elected or appointed federal, state, or local official (including commissioner or board member) who has contributed significantly to the benefit of county level parks, recreation, leisure services and open space programs.

Outstanding Professional

Lifetime: to recognize professionals who are retiring or leaving county level park service.

Fellow: to recognize an exemplary professional currently employed in county level park and recreation fields.

Friends of Parks and Recreation

Outstanding Contributor: presented to a lay individual who has made a significant contribution of land or fiscal resources to county parks and recreation.

Outstanding Volunteer: presented to a lay individual who has made a significant contribution of personal time and talent to county parks and recreation.

Outstanding Support Organization: presented to an organization that has responded in an exceptional manner by making a major contribution to benefit park and recreation programs or facilities.

Program, Area and Facility Awards

NACPRO offers the following awards for agencies depending upon population: Class I - counties with a county population under 500,000 and Class II - counties with a population over 500,000.

Park and Recreation Program

Awards: to recognize a county park and recreation agency that has pro-

vided a unique or exceptional program, activity, or event which provides an outstanding example that other agencies could adopt or emulate.

Park and Recreation Areas or Facilities: to recognize and honor excellence in recreation and park facilities; to focus national attention (both public and professional) on the very best of facility design; to encourage outstanding efforts in planning, design, construction, and benefits to the community; and to be a resource of information for the highest quality of facility development.

Operational Facilities: to recognize a support facility of unique design. Examples include but are not limited to maintenance shops, administrative offices, service centers, etc.

Historical/Cultural Facility: to recognize a unique facility development dedicated to historical or cultural preservation, recreation, and/or interpretation.

Special Awards

Environmental/Conservation

Award: to recognize an exceptional effort to reclaim, restore, preserve, acquire, or develop unique and natural areas and programs.

Removing Barriers Initiative: to recognize a unique program or facility that enables and encourages greater participation in parks and recreation by persons with disabilities.

A complete information packet and awards application will be available on the NACPRO web site at www.nacpro.org after February 1, 2009. Please note that applications must be postmarked by April 10, 2009. If there are any questions, please contact the Awards Committee Chair: John Buck at 808-270-8061 or john.buck@co.maui.hi.us.

The awards committee also encourages park and recreation professionals and public officials to visit the NACPRO website and experience the many great ideas and best practices shared by previous award winners. Check the NACPRO web site for membership information and applications.