

2019 NACPRO Award Nominations

Table of Contents

Environmental/Conservation	4
Dictionary Hill Acquisition and Trails Project	4
Glade Restoration	5
Interactive Dinosaur Garden at Lasdon Park	6
Jackson Property (2019 AWARDEE)	7
James River Conservation Area (2019 AWARDEE)	8
Kankakee Sands Preserve Restoration (2019 AWARDEE)	9
Stream Restoration Partnership	10
Historical/Cultural Facility	11
`Treasures of Westchester County Parks' Series	11
Eppington Plantation Historic Site - Stabilization and Restoration	12
Look About Lodge Renovation (2019 AWARDEE)	13
Mid-Lothian Mines Park - Mine Reclamation and Preservation	14
Resident Curator Program (2019 AWARDEE)	15
Marketing	16
"Closer Than You Think" Campaign (2019 AWARDEE)	16
Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County - Grand Opening Marketing Success	17
Destination Recreation Video Series (2019 AWARDEE)	18
Historic Riverside County Mobile App (2019 AWARDEE)	19
Parks After Dark Video	20
Promotion of Westwinds Metropark	21
Take a Minute to See What's In It Campaign	22
Time to Explore	23
Twitter Marketing (Today's Bird and Wildlife of the Day)	24
Video Marketing	25
Willy's Wilderness Kids' Website	26
Operational Facility	27
Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County - Collections Care and Storage Facility (2019 AWARDEE)	27
Outstanding Contributor	28
Blair Bowman - Senior Citizens' Program	28
Dan and Arlene McGinnis	29
Gift of Urban Arbor, a sculpture by Robert Sanabria	30
Matt Cole (2019 AWARDEE)	31
The Lazar Family - Heidi Allen and Tibor Lazar	32
Outstanding Public Official	33
Nancy Wallerstein (2019 AWARDEE)	33
The Honorable Dorothy Jaeckle (2019 AWARDEE)	34
Outstanding Support Organization	35

Friends of Green Spring (FROGS) (2019 AWARDEE)	35
St. Louis County Park Foundation	36
West Creek Conservancy (2019 AWARDEE).....	37
Outstanding Volunteer	38
Billy Huettner	38
Michael Applegate (2019 AWARDEE)	39
Scott Savage	40
Park & Recreation Facility - Class I	41
Fort Tuthill Bike Park	41
Granger Island Experience	42
Howard Marsh (2019 AWARDEE).....	43
Stark Parks Wildlife Conservation Center (2019 AWARDEE)	44
Park & Recreation Facility - Class II	45
Borrego Springs Civic Complex: Park, Library and Sheriff's Office (2019 AWARDEE).....	45
Brecksville Trailside Program Center	46
Burke Lake Golf Center	47
Deputy Brandon Coates Community Park	48
Deputy Scott Pine Community Park.....	49
Estrella Mountain Regional Park Remodel.....	50
French Regional Park Play Area (2019 AWARDEE).....	51
Lake Isabella Campground	52
O'Brien Park Recreation Center Renovation.....	53
Palm Beach County Junior Golf Card.....	54
Special Events at Pools and Beaches.....	55
The Don Knabe Norwalk Golf Center	56
The Meadows at Millennium Park	57
Park & Recreation Program - Class I.....	58
Beauty Beyond Boundaries	58
Chester Center's Media Match	59
Escape The Manor House.....	60
Grandparent/Grandchild Summer Camp (2019 AWARDEE).....	61
Summer Basketball League	62
Tree Climbing (2019 AWARDEE)	63
Trunk or Treat Event	64
Adopt-A-Turtle - Community Engagement/Expanding Donor Base	65
Park & Recreation Program - Class II.....	66
Dockless Bike Share.....	66
GeoTour.....	67
Girls Empowerment Conference (2019 AWARDEE).....	68
Golf in Schools.....	69
Greater Maywood Paddling Program (2019 AWARDEE)	70
Riverside County Healthy Living Extravaganza (2019 AWARDEE).....	71

SD Nights (San Diego/Safe Destination Nights)	72
Stroll For Well-Being	73
Planning Initiative.....	74
2018 Parks and Rereation Master Plan.....	74
Connect to Walk and Bike	75
Future State - Metroparks Culture.....	76
Master Planning 18 Reservations (2019 AWARDEE).....	77
Pueante Hills Landfill Park Master Plan (2019 AWARDEE)	78
Riverside County Comprehensive Trails Plan (2019 AWARDEE).....	79
Professional - Fellow.....	80
George Page (2019 AWARDEE)	80
Tim Gallaher	81
Troy Hodges	82
Professional - Lifetime	83
David Bowden	83
Jack Sutton (2019 AWARDEE)	84
John Scholtz (2019 AWARDEE).....	85
Terry Robison, PhD.....	86
Removing Barriers Initiative.....	87
Adapted Aquatics Program	87
Barrier Free Playground At Secor Metropark	88
Cooperative Garden of Morris County.....	89
Lake Skinner Splash Pad Expansion & Inclusive Playground.....	90
Removing Barriers (2019 AWARDEE).....	91
Silent Night at Heritage Hill (2019 AWARDEE).....	92
Veterans Memorial Vista at Rockwood Park.....	93
Trails & Corridors - Class I.....	94
Clayton County Trail System	94
Gold Star Memorial Trail: Connecting Communities and Remembering.....	95
Maumee River Water Trail (2019 AWARDEE).....	96
Dutch Gap Conservation Area Relic River Boardwalk (2019 AWARDEE)	97
Trails & Corridors - Class II.....	98
Maricopa County Trails Management Manual	98
Maricopa Trail (2019 AWARDEE)	99
Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail (2019 AWARDEE).....	100
Pine Hills Trail Phase 1.....	101
Valley Parkway Connector	102
Wiseburn Walking Path.....	103

Environmental/Conservation

Nominee: Dictionary Hill Acquisition and Trails Project

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of San Diego Parks and Recreation, California

Population: 3.3 Million

The Dictionary Hill Preserve spans 175 acres and is located in the unincorporated community of Spring Valley within the County of San Diego. The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) acquired the property, which was the last remaining large open space area in Spring Valley, on December 1, 2017. Now open to the public for passive recreation, the 175 acres of open space, coastal sage scrub, and chaparral habitat area provides 2.1 miles of trails that traverse the open space areas of the preserve. The preserve, acquired as part of the County of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program, also contains habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher and the Quino checkerspot butterfly, which are both protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The acquisition was funded by the County and will be managed by DPR with assistance from a local community group, the Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates (DHOSA). This project demonstrates an innovative public partnership that DPR established with DHOSA, which supported the acquisition and assists DPR with volunteer patrol of the preserve, litter removal, and coordination of clean-up events. In addition to protecting valuable habitat in the County and creating a unique partnership with the community, the establishment of the Dictionary Hill Preserve and trail system provides recreational opportunities that enrich the quality of life for San Diego's residents and visitors. As such, the Dictionary Hill Acquisition and Trails Project provides an important example of efforts undertaken by DPR to fulfill its mission of enhancing the quality of life in San Diego County by providing exceptional parks and recreation experiences and preserving significant natural resources.

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Environmental/Conservation

Nominee: Glade Restoration

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Occurring on the edge of the globally rare Oak Openings Region, Blue Creek Metropark "glade" is considered a significant ecosystem and consists of approximately 30 acres of prairie, sparsely vegetated limestone rock barrens, and thin-soiled Chinquapin Oak savanna. Due to high biodiversity potential, Metroparks embarked on a large restoration project with a goal of engaging volunteers and staff, committed to eradicating dangerous invasive plant species by hand lopping, sawing, chipping, and mowing. Volunteers were recruited via the Metroparks website and various e-mail invitations. During Oct. 2017- 2018, approximately 483 volunteer hours were accrued. 34 individual volunteers participated, as well as 3 groups from community organizations. Success was achieved when much of the invasive species population was removed and rare plant species increased as a result.

An endangered species called, Tall Cinquefoil, as well as nine other Ohio rare, state-listed plant species were found growing here. Baxter's violet, a plant that grew from the seed bank, may be a new species, as scientific research was facilitated at Ohio University after plant specimens were collected. Current and future species monitoring includes, rare plant monitoring involving volunteers, ecological research projects, and vegetation monitoring of fixed plots. Glade restoration updates and success stories are bi-annually presented to the community at the "Forum on Local Natural History and Research".

Other areas of this park are commonly used for active recreation, such as bouldering, paddle boarding, kayaking, and fishing. Blue Creek also supports these types of activities alongside this sensitive natural area, creating a unique experience for the visitor. Public interpretive programs are seasonally planned and easily highlight the local biodiversity located here. From 10/1/17 through 10/2/18, there were a total of approximately 25 public programs planned with 1865 participants. Many of these programs encompassed recreational activities combined with nature interpretation.

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Environmental/Conservation

Nominee: Interactive Dinosaur Garden at Lasdon Park

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Westchester County Parks, New York

Population: 962,000

Overview:

Dinosaurs are “alive” and well at Lasdon Park where visitors can travel back to a time when these fascinating creatures ruled the earth. The Dinosaur Garden has become a popular attraction at Lasdon Park, a 234-acre property consisting of an arboretum, an conservatory, a Chinese garden among many other features. Horticultural programs and tours are offered seasonally, along with an annual train show in the fall. The Dinosaur Garden debuted in 2016 as part of the annual Halloween show titled “Jurassic Lasdon,” a pre-historic-themed event that highlighted dinosaurs of all types and native plants from the pre-historic era, both inside and outdoors. This one-of-a-kind Dinosaur Garden was an instant hit with families.

Description:

Footprints, plant specimens and life-sized replicas of a Tyrannosaurus, Velociraptor and Brachiosaurus are just some of the features visitors encounter along the 1/8-mile trail that has plants that were indigenous to that time. For a virtual reality dimension, they download a smartphone app and scan a code at each stop to listen to the dinosaurs roar and stomp while learning how these creatures evolved, what they ate and what the earth looked like at that time. The Garden is also a great way for kids to learn about how the botanical world has evolved. The Garden is also a great photo opportunities for families to pose with their favorite. And, best of all, it's fun!

Results:

Since the Dinosaur Garden debuted two years ago, it has become a popular attraction and draws people from all over the area who return again and again. The Garden has brought in families who would otherwise not visit an arboretum and also has expanded the arboretum's program reach by attracting new families with children who now become friends of the arboretum.

To view a sample sign from the Dinosaur Garden, go to the App Store for iPhone or Google Play for Android. Scan the sign and the virtual reality sign will render on your device.

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Environmental/Conservation

Nominee: Jackson Property

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

In 2019, Cleveland Metroparks will add 88.8 acres of high-quality greenspace to its South Chagrin Reservation. This greenspace, referred to as the Jackson and Ellerin Properties named for the current landowners, is located in the Village of Bentleyville in the southeastern portion of Cuyahoga County and the Chagrin River watershed. Urban development is a major threat to this watershed and preservation of land is necessary to maintain the health and quality existing water resources. These properties contain over 25 acres of Category 3 wetlands, the highest quality wetlands, and over 2,300 linear feet of Class III primary headwater streams that flow to the Chagrin River. The mature forests on the properties provide beneficial wildlife habitat and buffer these aquatic resources.

These properties are part of a collaborative effort to preserve greenspace in this area of the county to protect these headwater streams and are adjacent to land already protected by the Geauga Park District and Western Reserve Land Conservancy. Preservation of this land also protects the primary source of drinking water for the Village of Chagrin Falls. Conservation in this area has been recognized since the establishment of South Chagrin Reservation in 1925, and this addition follows the lead of Cleveland Metroparks first leaders and visionaries to protect the natural water features of the region and represents one of the last remaining greenspaces of this size and quality in the county.

Cleveland Metroparks secured funds from both the Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP) and Ohio Public Works Commission's Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation Fund to purchase these properties. The Park District's WRRSP application for acquisition of the Jackson Property scored 29 of 30 available points and scored first in the State of Ohio, illustrating the importance of the preservation of these properties statewide.

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Environmental/Conservation

Nominee: James River Conservation Area

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

The James River Conservation Area property was originally scheduled for commercial development. Many attempts by the department to acquire this land were previously unsuccessful. The recession of 2009 opened the door, as the property reverted to the bank. With a grant from the Virginia Land Conservancy Fund of \$302,000, the property was purchased in 2016 for over a half-million dollars less than market value. This land acquisition protects one of few remaining undeveloped properties within the county along the James River.

The 107.9-acre conservation area is located along over one-mile of riverfront. This rich habitat is predominately forested and contains a designated 100-year floodplain and Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Areas.

The area is rich in history. Adjacent properties interpret the nation's first ironworks and Civil War battles. The Civil War defenses at Drewry's Bluff extend onto this property. The site contains two intact gun battery positions, which will be placed under conservation easement held by the state.

The James River is also part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the James River Heritage Trail, both of which will be incorporated into the park's development. Chesterfield County's Comprehensive Plan includes a Revitalization Plan for this highly urbanized and disadvantaged area of the county. One goal is preservation and promotion of the area's historic resources.

This new acquisition contributes to the revitalization of the area. In addition, the property connects to existing historical and recreational resources, such as the Ironworks Park and Falling Creek Trail. For the citizens in the area, the property will provide access to much needed recreation resources. The park master plan focuses on water access and interpretation of the natural, cultural and historical aspects of the site. Visitors will enjoy walking/hiking, biking, picnicking, boating and nature observation.

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Environmental/Conservation

Nominee: Kankakee Sands Preserve Restoration

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Forest Preserve District Will County, Illinois

Population: 677,560

In 1999, the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) began land acquisition in the Kankakee Sands region to purchase agricultural lands that separated three state-dedicated nature preserves, which is a designation given to the highest quality natural areas in Illinois. The nature preserves support a high diversity of vegetation types and provide habitat for over 700 species of native plants, including 12 threatened or endangered plant species. The nature preserves provide habitat for over 500 different species of wildlife including two threatened or endangered turtle species and seven insects listed as Species in Greatest Need of Conservation in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Once hydrology and plant communities are fully restored to the former agricultural fields, these lands will once again interconnect and buffer the nature preserves' remnant habitats, resulting in a 1,450 acre high-quality habitat complex adjacent to the Kankakee River.

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the FPDWC has been systematically re-establishing natural hydrology and planting hundreds of native species specific to the Kankakee Sands ecoregion. To date, 550 acres of native sand prairie and wetlands have been restored in the former agricultural fields. These high diversity restorations are important to allow cross-pollination, animal movement, and suitable microhabitats for a wide diversity of insects, birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and other wildlife, including the resident threatened and endangered species. The ecological quality of the natural areas have greatly improved through planting native species, controlling invasive species, reintroducing fire by way of controlled burns, and implementing a deer population management program. The recent award of an Illinois Special Wildlife Grant in the amount of \$122,000 from the IDNR will allow the FPDWC to continue advancing this large scale restoration project. Visitors to Kankakee Sands can easily access and enjoy this site from a newly constructed parking area with amenities or by hiking the 2.5 mile loop trail through the preserve where there are opportunities for birding, botanizing and nature photography.

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Environmental/Conservation

Nominee: Stream Restoration Partnership

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority & Fairfax County Park Authority & Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

At 406 square miles, Fairfax County is large and urbanizing quickly to support its 1.2 million residents. Development associated with a growing population has created impervious surfaces that don't absorb rainwater. The excess stormwater runoff is funneled directly into the nearest stream, and the volume and force of the water has led to erosion, tree and property loss, and habitat degradation in stream corridors, many of which are located on sensitive parkland.

The Stormwater Planning Division of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services has created management plans for the county's 30 watersheds. Funds received from Stormwater Service District fees are used to restore the ecological functions of stream corridors by stabilizing stream banks and stream beds, replacing invasive plants with native species, and reconnecting streams to their floodplains. To date, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services has completed 36 stream restoration projects, with 35 more planned or in construction.

Stream restorations are large-scale construction projects which require tree removal, noisy heavy equipment, trail closures, and general disruption to neighboring residents. Getting their buy-in before work begins can be challenging, but it's worth the effort.

The Dead Run stream restoration project is an example of a public works project that improved parkland. From February 2018 to February 2019, nearly two miles (2,838 feet) of stream flowing through McLean Central and Dead Run Stream Valley Parks in McLean, Va., were restored using natural channel design techniques. A unique partnership with the community resulted in saving 75 trees (>12-inch). In addition to environmental improvements, a pedestrian trail bridge was replaced to increase access to passive recreation. Public and private property has been fortified, wildlife habitat restored, and cleaner water, with less sediment and fewer nutrients, now flows into the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay beyond.

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Historical/Cultural Facility

Nominee: `Treasures of Westchester County Parks' Series

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Westchester County Parks, New York

Population: 962,000

Overview:

Westchester County Parks boasts more than 18,000 acres and operates more than 50 parks and facilities. With a department dating back to 1922, and land with histories dating back to Native Americans times, there are numerous stories and objects through which to tell the history of the department. "Treasures of PRC" was originally conceived by a staff curator to present the history of our parks system in a visual, interactive and entertaining way.

Description:

"Treasures" was first presented as a workshop session at the department's annual 2007 Staff Conference Day, a day of professional and personal development for all staff. Each Treasures "episode" has two parts: the first presents history via themed collections of stories and or objects, such as bricks, roller coasters, ice, waterfalls or chickens. Images are woven together with either a historical connection to the park or a modern use. The second part celebrates parks' timelines and anniversaries with a decade-by-decade look-back. Music and videos are interspersed.

Results:

With its recent 13th iteration, "Treasures" has become a highly anticipated part of our staff conference day, with staff from every section of the department enjoying this informative, educational and engaging presentation, Participation has more than doubled and now uses two workshop sessions to accommodate the group. "Treasures" fosters a sense of unity and pride among the staff in belonging to a great park system. In recent years, it has also been presented at several parks and to community organizations to inform our residents about the rich history of the Westchester County parks system and to introduce them to parks with which they may not be familiar.

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Historical/Cultural Facility

Nominee: Eppington Plantation Historic Site - Stabilization and Restoration

Nominee's Title: Director

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

Eppington Plantation was the home of Francis Eppes, a relative of Thomas Jefferson. This 4,000-acre 18th century farm welcomed many notable guests during its operation in the late 1700's and early 1800's. The house and 46 acres were acquired by donation in 1987. The house itself is a Chesterfield County Historic Landmark, a Virginia Historic Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places and is an excellent example of 18th century Georgian design. Eppington is well preserved and still looks much as it did 250 years ago. A foundation was formed and has partnered with the county over the last 30 years to preserve and interpret the history of the house and grounds. Unique to the house are limited changes over the past 175 years, leaving the interior and exterior original finishes and construction.

After an extensive study and review of historical renovation techniques, a repairs and restoration plan was developed to perform basic structural repairs and weather-tightening of the house's exterior. Design and construction efforts were monitored by a Peer Review Committee, composed of four statewide experts in historical preservation. The design and construction process created custom templates for siding, trim and other wooden components to replicate the original construction. Some siding and the roof was replaced and structural reinforcements in the basement helped stabilize the house. Monitoring devices were installed for temperature, moisture, and humidity, factors that greatly affect the longevity of the wooden and old sand mold bricks. Preliminary results have shown marked improvement inside the structure, illustrating the effectiveness of the repair and renovation efforts. All structural repairs were completed in a very low intrusive manner or if not, were hidden from public view.

The Foundation acquired adjacent forested land to supplement county funding. Silviculture has enabled the Foundation to provide periodic funding to augment repairs and improvements to the property. The Foundation provided 50% of the funding for this \$238,000 project. Repairs were completed in 2014.

Currently, the property is only open to visitors for department-operated tours and an annual celebration event, attracting over 600 visitors each year.

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Historical/Cultural Facility

Nominee: Look About Lodge Renovation

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

Look About Lodge is a beloved log building adjacent to Sulphur Springs Gorge in South Chagrin Reservation. It was constructed in 1938 by the Works Progress Administration in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks and the Cleveland Natural Science Club. The club, founded in the 1920s, promoted science education in Cleveland-area schools. Members used the lodge and surrounding park to engage the public in hikes, lectures, and workshops focused on science and nature. They also hosted social events at the lodge. Cleveland Metroparks took on responsibility for the lodge in 1994.

Built using chestnut logs, local stone, and featuring hand-wrought iron chandeliers, the lodge is an excellent example of WPA craftsmanship. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006 (NR listing 6000271). Cleveland Metroparks Historical and Cultural Resources Management Plan designates Look About Lodge as a high priority resource and recommends management practices to preserve and maintain the historical characteristics of the building and grounds.

Recent work to replace a large porch at Look About Lodge was conducted by Cleveland Metroparks staff with specialties in carpentry and stone masonry. The work consisted of completely removing the 16' x 30', second-floor porch due to severe deterioration of the main support beams as well as the stone support columns. The structure was then completely rebuilt using modern materials and advanced stone and carpentry techniques replicating the WPA style.

Our craftsmen took great care to match original details when reconstructing the elevated deck such as the hand-split sandstone columns, carving timbers for railings, and hand-shaping the structural timbers together and attaching the new deck to the lodge. The result of the work is a structurally sound replacement that perfectly mimics the original construction of the lodge and preserves it for future generations.

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Historical/Cultural Facility

Nominee: Mid-Lothian Mines Park - Mine Reclamation and Preservation

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

Mid-Lothian Mines Park, 42 acres in a heavily populated area of the county, was donated to the county in 2000. The park contains two deep shaft coal mines from the 1800s, extending 600' into bedrock. The mines played a major role in the county during the industrial revolution providing coal for the east coast and wartime manufacturing during the Civil War. The mines still show visible signs of their past, with ruins of mining structures. Few mines in the 150 square-mile Richmond Coal Basin have remaining intact remnants of this period.

After extensive public engagement, a master plan was developed that balanced the need for public use and interpretation of the mining story. Over a million dollars in grants were obtained from the Virginia Department of Transportation for road access and from the Division of Mines, Minerals and Energy for mine shaft reclamation. The project included construction of additional trails and bridges that allow public safety access for emergencies. Another bridge was modeled after a narrow-gauge trestle bridge of the period. Erosion control as well as other environmental improvements were addressed. Unique to the project was "safeing" the mine shafts. The Grove Shaft (600-900 feet deep) and a smaller mine shaft were sealed using non-intrusive surface covers, instead of the normal method of filling the shafts with gravel. This method preserved the intact shafts, complete with cribbing and ventilation tunnels for future interpretation. Before the Grove Shaft was closed, an old mining wheel was retrieved from about 500' down. Decorative historical fencing was installed around the Grove Shaft and adjacent Murphy Slope. The project took place in 2015-16.

Today the park has over 3/4 mile of trails, self-guided interpretive signage and fully reclaimed mine shafts. Over 160,000 visits occur each year for walking and lessons in history. The stone ruins of the mines surrounded by the beautiful woodland secures this moment in America's history.

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Historical/Cultural Facility

Nominee: Resident Curator Program

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

Fairfax County's Resident Curator Program is designed to rejuvenate the County's vacant and underutilized historic buildings and return them to use. The program offers long term leases, without charge, to qualified private citizens or organizations in exchange for their financial commitment to rehabilitate and maintain the property in accordance with established preservation standards. The program provides a unique opportunity to reduce public costs associated with care of these properties and to ultimately preserve these resources for the enjoyment and education of current and future generations. Periodic public access, via a blog or open house is mandated.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the program in November of 2014, with the Park Authority overseeing the program's development and implementation in 2016. The Park Authority employs a comprehensive heritage conservation strategy to assess and document the condition of each property, and manage its changes over time. The Archaeology and Collections Branch assesses the cultural resources of each property. The Planning Division master plans the parkland and use of historic buildings.

Out of 30 properties slated for program inclusion, five properties are now active in the program's process. Two properties; one a residence and the other an equestrian center, are now under the care of a curator, two are accepting applications for curatorship, and one is currently being advertised and will be available soon.

The program's initial curator began rehabilitating a vacant property, known as Stempson House in 2017. In the first year, the property, once home to the warden of notorious Lorton Prison, has more than broken even investment-wise for the county and curator.

Public meetings and open houses are hosted to advertise each property, with hundreds of inquiries received on real estate listings. Growing interest in this program demonstrates its success in fostering community partnerships and preserving our historic past.

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Marketing

Nominee: “Closer Than You Think” Campaign

2019 Awardee

Nominee’s Title:

Nominee’s Organization: Great Parks of Hamilton County, Ohio

Population: 813,822

In 2018, Great Parks introduced its “Closer Than You Think” campaign to build general awareness of the park agency, its 21 parks and preserves and its offerings. The campaign resulted from comprehensive research which included focus groups, ethnographic studies, rapid response panels, omnibus and citybus research, surveys, US Census information, and ESRI Tapestry reports.

From this research, Great Parks learned that residents, specifically families, Great Parks’ top demographic, were interested in outdoor education and recreation but were unaware that a Great Park was near them or the activities it provided. “Closer Than You Think” highlighted what residents can do and reminded them that a Great Park is literally closer than they think. The goal of the campaign was to bring favorable awareness among residents over 80%, to be measured by University of Cincinnati’s Greater Cincinnati Survey and independent telephone and online surveys conducted by Probolsky Research.

Marketing tactics included billboards, print, digital and social ads, social media, radio, television, video and community outreach. Billboards ran within approximately two-five miles of a Great Park (with park listed on board). Print ads ran in local, family and regional publications. Digital and social ads geo-targeted families and social media featured a video series called “Park of the Week”. Radio and television ran on local network stations along with community outreach efforts, media interviews and a podcast. Great Parks CEO was also featured weekly during the season (biweekly in the offseason) on a local morning news show.

The campaign was considered a success as research results indicated an increase in awareness of Great Parks and its offerings among residents. Overall favorable awareness of Great Parks reached 89% according to University of Cincinnati survey results (an increase of 10%) and 84% per Probolsky Research survey results (an increase of 5%).

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Marketing

Nominee: Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County - Grand Opening Marketing Success

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Lake County Forest Preserve District, Illinois

Population: 750,000

After spending more than a year relocating historic collections, building exhibitions from scratch, and creating a new name and brand, the nationally-accredited Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County, operated by the Lake County Forest Preserves, opened to the public on March 24, 2018. Welcoming over 3,065 visitors in just seven hours, opening day of the Dunn Museum became the largest grand opening celebration in the history of the Forest Preserves, well surpassing expectations. The happy crowd arrived curious, and left inspired.

To achieve the success of the opening day event, a comprehensive and strategic marketing, advertising and promotional plan was devised and implemented. The Museum's grand opening message was spread across multiple platforms, including radio, newspaper, magazine, bus and social media advertising, billboards, commercials, local community engagement, grassroots outreach, editorials and media relations. With a new name, logo and brand to promote, communications staff took a broad yet focused approach in reaching the greater countywide audience. We advertised through print, broadcast and digital avenues, targeting ads based on market research and best possible promotion. We used geo-targeting techniques to advertise locally, to all of our Lake County user base. New web pages were designed. Advertisements and promotions were designed and programmed to display on a 400-square-foot lobby screen. Through social media, we used live videos to engage users, both in person and online, throughout the event.

Between advertisements and promotions, editorials, media outreach, online efforts, use of interactive touch screens, and community engagement and grassroots efforts we were able to confidently reach hundreds of thousands of Lake County residents with information about the new Dunn Museum. Our promotion of the Dunn Museum grand opening was an all-hands-on-deck effort that produced unprecedented results.

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Marketing

Nominee: Destination Recreation Video Series

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department, Florida

Population: 1.4 million

The Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation Department created, and continues to produce, a high quality video series titled, "Destination Recreation," where we take viewers through a guided tour of our more than 110 parks and recreational facilities. The shows are narrated and include explanations of amenities, history, and provide a behind-the-scenes look at how staff contribute to overall visitor experience. We created the show because there was a need to educate residents and visitors about some of our unique parks and recreational facilities and encourage visits to these locations.

Choosing a name that felt like an actual travel show was an important component. A number of our park and beach locations are already favorite destinations among residents looking for a staycation and visitors looking for an inexpensive adventure. The second part of the title, Recreation, was chosen to remind viewers to take a break, take a walk, de-stress, improve physical and mental well-being, and enjoy the beautiful park setting. It also rhymes nicely with Destination.

In the first nine episodes, viewers travel through the Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, visit the John Prince Park Fitness Zone, tour West Delray Regional, Riverbend, Loxahatchee River Battlefield and Glades area parks, experience our amphitheaters and nature centers, including our state-of-the-art therapeutic recreation complex, and learn about one of Palm Beach County's most popular amenities - boating.

Viewed by thousands, the ongoing video series plays on Palm Beach County's Channel 20 television station and PBC Parks TV: www.youtube.com/pbcparcs. They are shared on Facebook, Twitter, department website, and played during outreach events. This new marketing tool has helped expose viewers to new locations and things to do, enhancing their lives and improving our local economy.

Video Links:

Destination Recreation 1 - Morikami Museum & Japanese Gardens: <https://youtu.be/ma4xuJToQ6Q>

Destination Recreation 2 - John Prince Park Fitness Zone: <https://youtu.be/Jl142t7CGK0>

Destination Recreation 3 - West Delray Regional Park: <https://youtu.be/lbYVT95nBHK>

Destination Recreation 4 - Amphitheaters: <https://youtu.be/p44QGa3sENM>

Destination Recreation 5 - Nature Centers: <https://youtu.be/bwJFcbxJ-kQ>

Destination Recreation 6 - Boating: <https://youtu.be/upPEdTGslx4>

Destination Recreation 7 - Glades Area Parks: <https://youtu.be/kAwXuT9fwck>

Destination Recreation 8 - Therapeutic Recreation Complex: <https://youtu.be/znybDz-Q7wo>

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Marketing

Nominee: Historic Riverside County Mobile App

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space District, California

Population: 2.2 M

The Riverside County Historical Commission has long desired to share historic landmarks with Riverside County residents and visitors. The commission and Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space (RivCoParks) staff sought to reach people in new and innovative ways and their efforts resulted in a mobile device app, putting the information directly in the hands of those that wish to visit historic landmarks and learn more about them. The Historic Riverside County App was launched in May of 2018 in conjunction with the County's 125th Anniversary. The app offers 4 driving tours along main thoroughfares in the different regions of the county and includes 125 historic landmarks and locations.

RivCoParks' project to create a mobile app tour of the county's historic landmarks had the primary goal to create a tool that could be shared with stakeholders within the community and their own agency to showcase the abundance of cultural resources in Riverside County, and to communicate the notion that "history is everywhere."

The complete version was launched in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store in September of 2018. Since its launch, the Historic Riverside County app has been used by the RivCoParks team as a way of advocating for not just the historic resources in the county. The accessibility of this free app has lent itself to this type of outreach, and RivCoParks staff have shared it with community. To date, the app has been downloaded by 75 users and feedback from users is overwhelmingly positive. Recognizing the usefulness of this app in creating community advocacy for historic resources in the future, RivCoParks staff will be marketing the app to the general public with a goal to have 1,000 active users by summer of 2019.

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Marketing

Nominee: Parks After Dark Video

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation, California

Population: 10 million

With its inaugural season hosted at only three locations, the Department of Parks and Recreation's national award-winning "Parks After Dark" (PAD) program launched in 2010 and has been expanding steadily. With continued expansion, the traditional methods of promotion - posters, pamphlets, fliers, press releases and announcements shared by park staff - could not alone adequately keep pace with the reach the Department envisioned. With the program expanding to an unprecedented 33 parks in 2018, in conjunction with the traditional methods, a new promotional prong was developed to promote the campaign: the PAD animated video.

The animated video successfully connected with diverse audiences of youth and families. Using colorful and upbeat bilingual testimonials from real patrons, the video conveyed the communal nature of the program. From a woman who had taken advantage of PAD parks as a safe-haven for her children when she was homeless, to a grandfather who gives a spirited rendition of one of the performances he heard at his local PAD event. The light-hearted and informative approach creates a cache that a flyer simply cannot accomplish. As an added bonus, the video was lauded and set a standard for other county departments when it was unveiled at the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors hearing on September 12, 2017.

The video (<https://bit.ly/2RQPGtt>) also included Department Director John Wicker as he had never been seen before: an animated, cheerful character that invites families and park patrons into the world of PAD, where they can see various activities taking place like concerts, games and special events. Viewers also meet other park staff whose animated characters lead them through cooking classes, teen programs and more. This promotional video was shared on the Department's social media platforms - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube - to grow PAD's outreach more efficiently and cost-effectively.

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Marketing

Nominee: Promotion of Westwinds Metropark

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Sometimes, the way to address challenges is not to attack them literally and with the most obvious methodology. For instance, we noticed that attendance at our archery programs at Westwinds Metropark was less than desirable. The goal was to create a new way to inform our audience and deliver messaging about the program, but we came to the conclusion that just talking about the merits of taking up archery wasn't working.

Metroparks decided to create a series of lighthearted and hilarious videos to shed light on Westwinds and promote its archery events. Thus, the "Bigfoot" video was born. The production was simple and took on the format of a local news story, but with an element of Christopher Guest mockumentary thrown in for good measure.

After posting the videos on our social media properties, we waited with baited breath to see what would happen. To our surprise and delight, the videos went viral, not only resulting in a spike in attendance at the archery event, but also in an audience of 80k viewers to the video almost instantly!

Since the release of the video, we found that people were asking about the Metroparks, chatting about various parks and Bigfoot "sightings", which then transitioned into valuable conversations about who we are and what we do. With this success in our pocket we budgeted for a quarterly video highlighting various initiatives or priorities that could benefit from publicity in this format. Next on the docket, National Squirrel Appreciation Day (yes, it's a thing). The goal of the video is to deliver and reaffirm our conservation messages.

Our biggest takeaway from making "Bigfoot" has been that when you meet people where they are (usually on social media) and create engaging content, it only solidifies the strong relationships that are already in place.

Watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adOViDEQ5SE&feature=youtu.be>

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Marketing

Nominee: Take a Minute to See What's In It Campaign

Nominee's Title: Superintendent of Parks

Nominee's Organization: Johnson County Park & Recreation District, Kansas

Population: 570,000

On July 31, 2018, thinking it would be a "cool" thing to show his friend, a 10-year old brought a loaded handgun in his backpack into a camp at a Johnson County Park & Recreation District (JCPRD) facility. While fumbling through his backpack to reach for a toy, the gun discharged. Thankfully, no one was hurt. But, recognizing that the outcome could have been tragic, the incident shook staff and the entire community. Immediately, and through the days that followed, JCPRD staff's strategic efforts to prevent the communication of misinformation resulted in a positive outcome from this unfortunate incident.

The gun discharged just before 11:00 a.m. and a press release was sent out just after 2:00 p.m. Staff posted continually on Facebook and Twitter, informing the community and addressing questions and concerns. An emergency staff meeting was held that afternoon to discuss plans moving forward, recognizing this could have happened in any JCPRD facility. After much discussion, the "Take a Minute, See What's In It" backpack campaign was born, encouraging parents to team up with JCPRD to better ensure safety by checking their child's backpack prior to and after all activities, including sporting events, camps, and visiting friends' homes.

Within 24 hours of the incident, a logo was designed. The campaign was rolled out at an afternoon press conference, with all four local TV stations in attendance. In the following days, this incident and safety campaign were reported by over 35 media outlets across the United States. Within a week, staff organized a mental health forum where professionals discussed how to speak with children about trauma.

Logoed backpack tags, keyrings, and stickers were distributed to all children in JCPRD camps, preschool and Out-of-School-Time programs to keep the message front of mind.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjtblp2j9bE&feature=youtu.be>

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Marketing

Nominee: Time to Explore

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

While Cleveland Metroparks attracts more than 18 million recreational visits annually, many guests were found to identify most with their local park(s), as opposed to the Park District as a whole, which includes 18 park reservations, 300+ miles of trails, eight golf courses and nationally-acclaimed Zoo. With a desire to promote broader guest exploration and awareness, Cleveland Metroparks launched the 'Time to Explore' marketing campaign in April 2018, focusing on the concept of exploration to educate the community about new opportunities to connect with nature and programs.

The 'Time to Explore' campaign included a unique partnership with Cleveland Clinic called 'Explore Your Park,' a localized community-based extension of the overall campaign to promote healthy living through outdoor recreation and programming. The campaign identified 12 high traffic areas across Cleveland Metroparks, in close proximity to Cleveland Clinic locations, to promote activities with customized displays featuring recreational challenges/programs unique to each location. Cleveland Clinic also supported the campaign in 55 of its locations through collateral material and workforce. Clinic doctors were engaged with the campaign to help educate about the health benefits of outdoor recreation, and were featured in pre-roll footage talking about how they use local Cleveland Metroparks. Digital and print newsletters also featured messaging on the health benefits of active recreation in Cleveland Metroparks.

The campaign incorporated a digital and social media component 'Ten to Explore,' featuring ten highlights across Cleveland Metroparks each month. Since launch, the campaign has helped increase attendance at events by an average of 14%, reached more than 7.1 million people on social media and earned more than 100 million impressions. The launch also included a free photo book "Gems of the Emerald Necklace." The campaign has served as a catalyst driving record visitation and promoting recreation in Cleveland Metroparks to attain a healthy lifestyle.

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Marketing

Nominee: Twitter Marketing (Today's Bird and Wildlife of the Day)

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Forest Preserve District of Will County, Illinois

Population: 690,000

In 2018, the Forest Preserve District looked to expand on its successful social media marketing. Based on the data available to us, it was clear that members of the public have a strong and positive reaction to outstanding nature photography. While our Instagram account performs well for us, our photos on Twitter get an equally powerful reaction and, due to the ease of sharing content on Twitter via retweets, we decided to focus additional efforts on that platform. In particular, we know the birding community is especially passionate from our interactions online, so we put our emphasis there and launched Today's Bird (Twitter.com/todaysbird).

The idea behind it is simple: One stunning bird photo per day. It immediately took off and seeing the success of that account, we created Wildlife of the Day (Twitter.com/wildlifeofday). It's the same concept, except this one includes all forms of wildlife.

Our motivation for launching these accounts included:

- Providing another avenue to showcase all of the beautiful wildlife photos from both staff and volunteers.
- Further engaging with the public and inspiring them to get outdoors.
- Promoting a conservation conversation beyond Will County.

To accomplish the third item, we reached out to the Forest Preserve District of Lake County to become a partner on each account, providing some of its own photos and then retweeting Today's Bird and Wildlife of the Day to their district Twitter account. While the Forest Preserve District of Will County administers both accounts, bringing the Forest Preserve District of Lake County on board has served to provide a greater variety of high-quality photos while also expanding the reach of each account through their retweets. The partnership has been a win-win for both organizations, because it also provides daily content for their social media feed.

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Marketing

Nominee: Video Marketing

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Forest Preserve District of Will County, Illinois

Population: 690,000

In 2018, the Forest Preserve District of Will County expanded its video marketing efforts by increasing the number and diversity of videos it produced. All videos created by the Forest Preserve are produced in-house and have four main goals:

- To showcase the incredible beauty of our preserves.
- To educate the public about nature and the District's offerings.
- To tell engaging stories that inspire people to spend time outdoors.
- To entertain.

We were able to accomplish all of these goals through the use of a drone, a 360-degree camera, iPhone videography and a DSLR camera.

Videos are primarily shot and entirely produced by one District staff person who also manages the Forest Preserve's social media and website, among other duties.

Videos range in topic from highlighting wildlife or featuring a long-time volunteer to sharing information about the forest preserves or providing a chuckle with kids telling nature jokes.

In 2018, we also launched an effort to utilize videos in public programs. To kick that off, we produced our longest video to date - just over 7 minutes in length - highlighting the benefits of bats. It was one of the many features at our annual "Bats! Bats!! Bats!!!" program and was shown to a captivated audience at one of the District's picnic shelters where bats have taken up residence.

In 2018, 79 videos were produced, ranging from 30 seconds to 7 minutes long. These videos were viewed 1.3 million times on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube throughout the year and a huge driver of audience engagement for the District.

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Marketing

Nominee: Willy's Wilderness Kids' Website

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Forest Preserve District of Will County, Illinois

Population: 690,000

In November 2018, as part of an effort to further expand our digital footprint and increase our outreach efforts, the Forest Preserve District of Will County launched a new website, WillysWilderness.org. The website is geared toward children and their parents and is routinely updated with a variety of content from feature articles on animals, outdoor activity ideas, crafts, book suggestions and videos of kids telling nature jokes. All material is tailored to kids ages 3-12.

Previously, such content was included on our main District website (ReconnectWithNature.org), but this posed a number of challenges:

- The content was included on single page and only updated quarterly, which wasn't very user-friendly.
- The material didn't have a high enough profile.
- Specific pieces of material could not be shared on social media since it was all grouped on one page.
- There was no way to keep an archive of previous content online.

Creating a separate website solved all of those problems and resulted in some other significant benefits:

- Publishing on a separate, dedicated website allowed us to better categorize information and post more frequently.
- By not having all material grouped together, the content now has better search engine optimization.

The new structure allowed us to pull more detailed analytics for this specific content. For example, we can drill down on the data to see what particular pieces of content perform better in terms of page views and time on page. We can also gauge who our audience is and where they are coming from. All of this is very valuable in guiding future content decisions.

The response has been very positive and we're seeing a great improvement in overall page views. To date, approximately 55 percent of traffic to the website is coming in from social media.

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Operational Facility

2019 Awardee

Nominee: Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County - Collections Care and Storage Facility

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Lake County Forest Preserve District, Illinois

Population: 750,000

The Lake County Forest Preserve owns and operates the nationally-accredited Bess Bower Dunn Museum of Lake County. Founded in 1976, the museum holds significant object and archival collections -- over 20,000 artifacts and 1,000 linear feet of archival material -- that tell the history of Lake County, Illinois and its place in the surrounding Chicago-metro area. Objects as large as plows, as small as thimbles, as durable and heavy as fossil rocks, and as fragile as handmade lace, make for challenges in protecting and storing the collection.

In early 2018 the museum was moved from its original home in repurposed 1930s wood-frame farm buildings to the Forest Preserve General Offices building. One of the key challenges of the move was designing a safe, efficient storage and care facility for the historic collections in the basement level of a three-story modern office building, which would adhere to the strict standards of nationally-accredited museums (only 3% of American museums have attained the distinction of accreditation).

Several challenges were overcome to design and build the facility, including: working within limiting floor-load capacities in the upper floors of the General Offices; mitigating the potential for water damage to collections; creating efficiencies in storage design to allow for storage of the entire collection within a designated footprint; and, creating appropriate solutions for environmental, security, and access requirements. Through location of the facility in the basement, careful design of above-case water shields, use of compact storage furniture, and working with the Forest Preserve's operational departments, the Dunn Museum staff took what had been a "make-do" facility in former dairy farm buildings to a state-of-the-art showpiece in which the whole community take pride.

Link to Space Saver Case Study of Dunn Museum project:

<http://www.spacesaver.com/portfolio-posts/collections-storage-layout/>

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Outstanding Contributor

Nominee: Blair Bowman - Senior Citizens' Program

Nominee's Title: Suburban Collection Showplace Owner and Manager

Nominee's Organization: Michigan State Fair, Michigan

Population:

In 1849, Michigan held its very first state fair, making the Michigan State Fair the second-oldest of its kind in the nation. In 2009, after 160 years of celebrating agriculture, small business and family entertainment, the fair was discontinued by the state government, due to ongoing budget issues.

Blair Bowman was determined to revive the tradition of the Michigan State Fair. As owner and manager of the Suburban Collection Showplace, a state-of-the-art Exposition, Convention and Conference Center in Novi, Michigan, Bowman brought back the legacy and beloved traditions of the original State Fair, starting in 2012.

Since then, while encouraging the new direction of the Michigan agriculture industry and supporting a wide range of philanthropic efforts, Bowman has made it his mission to include as many people as possible in the celebration that is the fair - those of all ages, abilities and income levels.

Bowman chose to collaborate with Oakland County Parks and Recreation to sponsor the Senior Citizens' Program at the fair because he knew the parks system has direct access to senior citizens through various programs it hosts annually, including fall color tours and Classic Christmas. Oakland County Parks and Recreation provides transportation to about 750 individuals from senior centers in Oakland County to the fair.

The Senior Citizens' Program is so popular that the steering committee is considering making the program two days long in 2019.

Michigan Association of Fairs & Exhibitions Officer LC Scramlin said the fair wouldn't be possible without Bowman. "When we pulled off the fairgrounds in 2009, I really doubted if we could ever have a state fair again. Then we met Blair Bowman, heard his vision, and the world changed. Since then, the fair hasn't stopped growing."

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/62368680/20178-state-fair-final-annual-report1>

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Outstanding Contributor

Nominee: Dan and Arlene McGinnis

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: McGinnis Family Foundation gift: Digitalis Delta4 Planetarium, Virginia

Population:

Dan and Arlene McGinnis, through their family foundation, gifted Franklin Park Arts Center in excess of \$20,000 for the purchase of a portable, inflatable planetarium. Adjacent residents to Franklin Park and patrons of its Arts Center, the McGinnis' had hoped that an observatory could be created for star gazing in Franklin Park. However, after a presentation regarding the new technology of portable planetariums, the McGinnis' chose to invest in this educational tool that would not only encourage star gazing, but bring new audiences to the Arts Center. At the unveiling in April 2018, the McGinnis said, "This realizes a dream we had of sharing our love of both Franklin Park and the Arts Center with the community by giving them a new way to enjoy both while also educating of all ages about the wonder of our world."

Since August 2018, the Arts Center has welcomed 439 visitors to the planetarium, generating \$2,371 in revenue. Audience surveys have shown that 75% to 90% of visitors to the planetarium are first time visitors to the Park and to the Arts Center. Volunteer requests are also increasing and two new volunteer instructors are in training as planetarium presenters.

The planetarium not only increased our capacity for programming; it has significantly increased our community presence and awareness in just the first six months of use. It continues to garner media attention as well, perpetuating support and interest in not only the planetarium, but also the entire offering of programs. This gift has been a catalyst for growth, community awareness and new programming.

<https://loudounnow.com/2018/04/30/franklin-parks-galaxy-gazing-magnified-with-digital-planetarium/>

https://www.loudountimes.com/entertainment/experience-the-wonder-of-space-at-franklin-park-s-new/article_1ff614b8-c71b-11e8-ae23-bb0737088d05.html

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Outstanding Contributor

Nominee: Gift of Urban Arbor, a sculpture by Robert Sanabria

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Loudoun County Parks, Recreation & Community Services, Virginia

Population:

Loudoun County resident artist Robert Sanabria gifted a sculpture, "Urban Arbor", valued at \$28,000 as the keystone for a planned outdoor sculpture garden at Franklin Park. The 52" x 80" x 48" bronze-on-copper sculpture was donated and installed in October 2018 by Mr. Sanabria, who also hosted a retrospective exhibit of maquettes and paper casts. The unveiling reception and month long exhibit generated tremendous interest with visitors from the tristate D.C. metro area. Mr. Sanabria also donated 20% of his exhibit sales (nearly \$1,000) to the Arts Center, and a second smaller maquette valued at \$750.

The donation of this sculpture represents the beginning of a new relationship forged with this nationally recognized artist. His commitment and support of the outdoor sculpture garden will assist the Arts Center and its Friends group in securing the remaining funds and sculpture/artwork needed to create an outdoor sculpture garden in Franklin Park, the first in the Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Community Services facilities. Mr. Sanabria has pledged a second sculpture donation of equal or greater value once the garden is completed.

Mr. Sanabria's retrospective exhibit in the gallery of the Arts Center raised the profile of the gallery and caught the attention of local media as well. In addition, the Arts Center has seen an increase in artist submissions for the open call for entry exhibits during the year. While Franklin Park Arts Center has always been a facility to support and promote the visual and performing arts, this sculpture donation is in itself a visual statement of identity for the Arts Center.

<https://blueridgeleader.com/unveiling-of-robert-sanabria-sculpture-on-oct-14/>

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Outstanding Contributor

Nominee: Matt Cole

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Co-owner/Head Brewer

Nominee's Organization: Fat Head's Brewery, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

In 2012, Cleveland Metroparks was embarking on a new approach to building and managing sustainable trails. This required significant investment in new staff, equipment and a specialized volunteer program. Around this time, Matt Cole, owner and brewer at the local Fat Head's Brewery had become a regular rider at our newly opened mountain bike trails. He so appreciated this resource, he offered to brew a beer for Cleveland Metroparks trails and donate a portion of the proceeds to the Park District's Trails Fund. He named it Trail Head Pale Ale.

As a businessman, Matt wanted his brand associated with Cleveland Metroparks, but challenges arose. Ohio Revised Code restricted alcohol promotion by public entities, preventing Matt from using the Park District logo and preventing us from touting the collaboration. We couldn't advertise beer sales at our golf courses and restaurants. Nevertheless, he stuck with the project until we found a compromise after months of deliberation and despite the fact that it would be challenging to associate his brand with ours.

Cleveland Metroparks and Fat Head's called upon local trail enthusiasts to help spread the word. Trail Head Pale Ale sold large amounts immediately. The original 40 kegs were gone in one week and people began requesting it at their local taps. The brewery ramped up quantities and the beer won a coveted silver medal at the 2013 Great American Beer Festival.

In November 2013, Matt Cole presented Cleveland Metroparks with a check for \$10,000. In February 2019, Matt presented Cleveland Metroparks with a check for \$55,000, bring his total donations to over \$125,000. Matt is the single largest donor to the Trails Fund and his money helped build the trails program from the ground up, helping pay for equipment, materials and staff and volunteer training.

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Outstanding Contributor

Nominee: The Lazar Family - Heidi Allen and Tibor Lazar

Nominee's Title: Contributor

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

The Lazar Family, Heidi Allen and Tibor Lazar, and their sons Corvin and Keaton, have a lifetime of loving nature. Their house is filled with a menagerie of animals that welcome visitors to their home. Heidi and Tibor come from families that love nature, animals and giving back to the community.

Heidi's desire to help the environment led her to become a volunteer with the IMA (Invasive Management Area) program in 2014. Through her work, she observed the great need to help restore parkland to its natural state. To that end, Heidi and Tibor established The Lazar Family Fund to create an endowment to support natural resource stewardship efforts on Fairfax County parkland.

The Lazar Family Fund has agreed to donate \$360,000 over the next ten years, in addition to the generous \$16,000 donated since 2015. "We want this fund to be a starting base and encourage other people to give to this fund so we can have good-quality parkland that people can enjoy. We need to take better care of the land and control invasive plants," said Heidi.

The Fund was established in memory of Tibor's parents, Rita and Csaba Lazar, Hungarian immigrants whose environmental legacy continues in Rappahannock County. "I'm so happy we've been able to put this together. My hope is that down the line, our sons, who both love nature, will continue supporting charitable funds, follow through and choose well," stated Heidi.

The Lazar's philanthropy is timely and an inspiration for others who love nature and value the importance of beautiful parklands in Fairfax County. With over 23,000 acres, the Park Authority's ability to maintain parklands in a well-maintained condition is a daily challenge. The Lazar Family Fund will help give the Park Authority the leverage and resources to continue and expand stewardship of our parkland.

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Outstanding Public Official

Nominee: Nancy Wallerstein

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Board Member

Nominee's Organization: Johnson County Park & Recreation District, Kansas

Population: 570,000

In February 2019, Nancy Wallerstein completed her tenure as the longest serving Board Member in Johnson County Park & Recreation District's (JCPRD's) history. Nancy served for more than 20 years representing the citizens of Johnson County. During that time, she served in every board officer position multiple times, including four terms as chair.

During Nancy's tenure, JCPRD acquired more than \$40 million in park land; opened four new parks, providing access to more than 3,000 additional acres of greenspace to the public; constructed New Century Fieldhouse; acquired and renovated the Mill Creek Activity Center and Mid-America West Sports Complex; expanded Ernie Miller Nature Center; and constructed new dressing room and restroom buildings at The Theatre at the Park. Additionally, under Nancy's leadership, development of Meadowbrook Park was initiated via a partnership with City of Prairie Village, the developer of the site, and Johnson County Government, providing 80 acres of park land in an area of the county underserved by open space.

Nancy's passion for the arts led to the acquisition and development of the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center. Nancy advocated tirelessly for an architecturally significant building to be converted to the County's first indoor arts facility and new home for the Johnson County Museum. The success of this building will be felt for generations in this region.

Under Nancy's leadership, JCPRD was a national Gold Medal finalist twice, culminated by a win in 2017 in New Orleans where Nancy proudly joined staff to accept this prestigious award. In addition, JCPRD has successfully remained CAPRA accredited during Nancy's tenure meeting 100 percent of the standards in 2009 and 2014.

Nancy has indeed created a lasting legacy in Johnson County through her leadership and dedication to preserve green space, the arts and development of parks and recreation facilities.

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Outstanding Public Official

Nominee: The Honorable Dorothy Jaeckle

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Bermuda District Supervisor

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County, Virginia

Population: 344,000

Since 2007, Dorothy Jaeckle has served the citizens of Chesterfield County as the Bermuda District Supervisor with an unwavering focus on the health and wellness of its residents, particularly, its youth. This focus has made Ms. Jaeckle an invaluable ally of parks and recreation initiatives in Chesterfield County. Ms. Jaeckle's leadership and dedication have led to the adoption of the Bikeways and Trails Plan into the county's Comprehensive Plan, which will create a county-wide network of bikeways and mixed-use trails, and the Jefferson Davis Special Area Plan, which prioritizes the revitalization of park and recreation facilities in one of the most underserved areas of the county.

Ms. Jaeckle's commitment to active living was affirmed in 2010 when she joined the Board of Directors of the Richmond Sports Backers, a nonprofit dedicated to providing active living opportunities for all. A tireless advocate of free access to recreation opportunities for youth, Ms. Jaeckle has regularly approved the transfer of district improvement funds to provide recreational facility upgrades and repurpose existing facilities to meet the changing needs of the community. Ms. Jaeckle was instrumental in the preservation of Historic Point of Rocks, said to be the most historic property in Chesterfield County, which is now a historical park.

Ms. Jaeckle's dedication to parks and recreation programs cannot be understated. Her continuous support for parks and recreation initiatives have helped shape Chesterfield County for generations to come.

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Outstanding Support Organization

Nominee: Friends of Green Spring (FROGS)

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Friends Group

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

A quarter century of giving has sown seeds of success at Green Spring Gardens. The Friends of Green Spring, a 501(c)(3) membership organization founded in 1993 and known colloquially as FROGS, celebrated 25 years of service to FCPA in 2018. With over 1,500 members, FROGS offers financial, operational, programmatic, facility, and volunteer support. Major projects include the Garden Gate Plant Shop, Harry Allen Winter Lecture Series, art shows, glasshouse renovations, gazebo renovations, Historic House renovations, the Wheels Appeals (providing staff utility vehicles), and ongoing funding for summer interns and seasonal staff. These projects cover just a portion of support FROGS has provided. FROGS funded improvements to ponds at Green Spring Gardens, overall propagation operations, increased the irrigation system for added efficiency of plant maintenance, and greened the park with money for plants and maintenance. FROGS supports professional development opportunities for staff and provides money for tools.

Since 1993, FROGS donated more than \$2 million to support the park. FROGS has significantly grown their Annual Appeal and enhanced the fundraising process by identifying a specific project each year. FROGS has used its Annual Appeal to support programs such as the Frances Tyler Fund, which subsidizes educational programs for children from Title I schools and has supported more than 12,000 children with educational programs since 2012.

As the seasons warm, newlyweds pose under the gazebo, community gardeners tend to garden plots and the exquisite witch hazel specimens, afternoon teas in the historic manse provide delightful social opportunities and busloads of kids visit the children's garden regularly learning the tenets of environmental stewardship. FROGS is a great partner to FCPA. They bring added value to the park by providing mission aligned programs, operational support, and bring new meaning to the word support organization.

More information on previous accomplishments may be found at www.friendsofgreenspring.org

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Outstanding Support Organization

Nominee: St. Louis County Park Foundation

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: St. Louis County Park Foundation, Missouri

Population: 1,000,000

The St. Louis County Park Foundation was established on July 15, 2015. The kickoff event was held at one of the most visited county parks, Tilles Park. During the kickoff event, the foundation made their first contribution by donating a fountain for the lake in the park. Over the past three years the foundation has been able to raise funds to make additional purchases of two fountains at Faust Park and Spanish Lake Parks and playground equipment at Tilles, Faust, Bee Tree and Suson Parks. In addition, a new gym divider curtain at the North County Recreation Complex and for three shade structures at the new Aquatic Center at the Pavilion at Lemay in Jefferson Barracks Park were purchased through funds raised by the foundation.

In 2018, as their funding increased the St. Louis County Park Foundation has taken on larger projects which include the contribution of new spray pool at Castle Point Park and playground and exercise equipment at four locations along a "family trail" at Spanish Lake Park. The Family Trail concept was designed to encourage multi-generational use and features four separate children's play stations with nature-themed attractions and exercise equipment for adults. Kids, parents and grandparents can all share these spaces along the 1.4 mile trail that combine fun and exercise. Similar Family Trails are planned at two other county parks: Jefferson Barracks Park and Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park.

Currently, the foundation is working on a strategic plan that will help provide direction in conjunction with the recently completed Master Plan for the St. Louis County Parks Department. The Park Foundation is committed to making new recreational opportunities for the entire St. Louis County population.

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Outstanding Support Organization

Nominee: West Creek Conservancy

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

West Creek Conservancy (WCC) is a conservation organization that reclaims vacant urban lands and restores streams, wetlands, woods, and natural habitats in Greater Cleveland. WCC establishes trails and greenways to link people and neighborhoods providing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Northeast Ohio while helping to conserve greenspace and manage stormwater.

In 2006, WCC acquired 279 acres of land in one of the most densely populated areas of NE Ohio, leading to the formation of Cleveland Metroparks (CM) 16th reservation. In 2013, the Watershed Stewardship Center, which is dedicated to research and sustainable watershed action, was constructed on that property through partnership with WCC, CM, and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. Through WCC, West Creek Reservation has grown to 375 acres in 12 years, and WCC will transfer 127 more acres to West Creek Reservation in the next few years through recent acquisitions. These efforts contribute to the West Creek Greenway that will link West Creek Reservation regionally with numerous municipal parks and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Moreover, WCC has acted as an agent for other collaborators to protect greenspace including land (Irishtown Bend) that will be critical in completing the Towpath Trail, an 85+ mile link from Canal Lands Park in Tuscarawas County to Lake Erie at Cleveland Metroparks Lakefront Reservation.

WCC also provides educational and volunteer opportunities through "Walk and Talk" hikes, rain barrel workshops, and hands-on restoration projects. WCC seeks creative ways to introduce people to these new amenities by hosting unique events like Tails for Trails, Creatures in the Forest 5k Run, and an annual Conservation Gala where in 2018, Cleveland Metroparks was honored. WCC supports effective and efficient cooperation of other regional conservation groups by steering the Central Lake Erie Basin Watershed Collaborative and chairing the Greater Cleveland Greenways and Trails Conference.

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Outstanding Volunteer

Nominee: Billy Huettner

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Loudoun County Parks, Recreation & Community Service, Virginia

Population:

Billy Huettner has made a great impact on the administrative office of the Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS). His dedication to assigned tasks has given department staff more time to focus on their own job duties. Billy's presence in the office has been twofold in that he has also spread disability awareness and sensitivity among office staff.

Billy graduated high school in June 2018. As a longtime Loudoun County resident and customer of PRCS programs, Billy wanted to give back to his community, while gaining job skills. Billy offered his time to the Children's Program Division before and after school by taking on tedious tasks like scanning documents and creating and organizing materials for meetings and presentations. Billy has proven to be instrumental in allowing program staff more time to focus on their internal and external customers. After Billy graduated high school, he offered his support to the Adaptive Recreation summer camp program (six-week duration), as well as the other divisions in the office. Billy was instrumental in the agency's 2018 initiative to go digital by volunteering over 2,000 hours to scan thousands of the department's historical documents! Billy's volunteer work saved the agency countless staff hours and dollars.

Billy's presence and inclusion in the office presents an opportunity to spread disability awareness and sensitivity training for staff. With his outgoing personality, he has shown employees that working side-by-side with people of different abilities doesn't have to be an intimidating or uncomfortable experience. Additionally, employees who previously lacked experience working with individuals of different abilities have embraced Billy's assistance with projects and on-site events.

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Outstanding Volunteer

Nominee: Michael Applegate

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Volunteer

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

Michael Applegate has turned volunteering into a nearly full-time job. He spends an average of 30 hours a week maintaining trails at Fairfax County's Laurel Hill Park, as well as the area's Apple Orchard and Equestrian Center. On even the hottest days of a Washington-area summer, he can be found pushing a mower, trimming trees, shoveling gravel, inspecting and fixing storm damage, and improving trail surface and drainage along the five-mile, single-track trail network

In 2018, a member of the public nominated Applegate for a Park Authority volunteer award after being "struck with admiration for someone who would endure those unpleasant hot conditions to help in the park and work deep in the woods with a hand tool to improve trails." His dedication and untiring work ethic has brought the quality of the trails at Laurel Hill Park to a level well beyond that which would have been possible with Fairfax County maintenance resources alone. His attention to the walking trails has increased the accessibility and enjoyment of trail usage, and his maintenance and improvement of bicycle trails has made this area a 'go-to' spot for mountain bike enthusiasts. Pathways that were once overgrown and nearly impassable in the summer are now a park magnet.

Depending on the season, Applegate can be found mowing the grass aprons along the trails, identifying native trees to save from overgrowth of blackberry vines, building ramp curves and moguls to enhance the mountain bike experience, filling in trail washout spots, and keeping a watchful eye on the security of the grounds. In his three years as a Park Authority volunteer, he has not only improved the park experience for countless visitors, he has served as a role model for children and adults, demonstrating the importance of volunteerism and the difference one person can make.

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Outstanding Volunteer

Nominee: Scott Savage

Nominee's Title: Board of Park Commissioners, President

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Scott J. Savage joined the Board of Park Commissioners in 2007, but his service to the park district began in 2002 when he co-chaired a levy campaign to purchase additional parkland.

Passage of that levy, with two-thirds of the vote, sparked an unprecedented period of growth, from about 7,500 to over 12,000 acres, and from nine to 16 parks. Three more parks are in various stages of development. Before this period of rapid growth began just over five years ago, it had been 40 years since the community had a new Metropark.

Scott was recently sworn in to his sixth term, and serves as president of the five-member board.

Recent highlights under Scott's leadership include:

- Opening Howard Marsh, a 1,000-acre wetland restoration near the Lake Erie shore that was the most ambitious project in Metroparks 90-year history. The new park has won numerous awards, including a recent Governor's Award (best of show) from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, and a national conservation honor from Duck's Unlimited, a project partner.
- Acquiring a corridor that will one day connect five Metroparks and three State Nature Preserves while restoring globally rare habitat in a region known as the Oak Openings.
- Opening Fallen Timbers Battlefield Metropark, an affiliated unit of the National Park Service and one of three separate locations that make up a National Historic Site.
- Completing the acquisition of a property in North Toledo, an underserved area of the community. When it opens next spring, Manhattan Marsh Preserve will fulfill the park district's pledge to place a Metropark within five miles of every resident of Lucas County
- And beginning the development of a riverfront park, adjacent to downtown Toledo, that will further the downtown master plan and preserve important public access to the waterfront.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class I

Nominee: Fort Tuthill Bike Park

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Coconino County Parks & Recreation, Arizona

Population: 140,776

Coconino County, Arizona, is the second largest county in the contiguous United States and is comprised of 42% public land. While Coconino County residents and visitors have a vast network of public lands to enjoy for recreation, they have only one bike park, Fort Tuthill Bike Park.

Set amid the Ponderosa pine trees at Fort Tuthill County Park, Fort Tuthill Bike Park originated with a community desire to have a gathering place where people could practice their mountain biking skills. A 2013 partnership agreement between non-profit Flagstaff Biking Organization (FBO) and Coconino County Parks & Recreation (CCPR) allowed FBO to go forward with fundraising. Once the initial funds were secured, construction of Phase 1 began in October 2014 on this seven-acre facility. Through the years, CCPR and FBO secured additional funding through donations and grants from Bell Built, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Recreational Trails Program.

Designing the Bike Park pump tracks, jumps, and custom features requires trained personnel that incorporate skilled design. The Bike Park phases have been designed and built by IMBA Trail Solutions, FlowRide Concepts, American Conservation Experience, and CCPR staff.

Countless bicycle enthusiasts of all ages and all abilities test their mettle in the park. There are youngsters on strider bikes enjoying the youth pump track, and riders on BMX bikes taking jumps on the expert flow trail. Five National Interscholastic Cycling Association teams from the Flagstaff area, totaling 100 youth, utilize the Bike Park for their training. Since the completion of Phase 2 last fall with two pump tracks, four progressive drops, Belgian steps, and several wooden features including two wall rides, riders can increase their mountain biking skills on a variety of new features. CCPR is happy to feature this state-of-the-art Bike Park in Northern Arizona!

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class I

Nominee: Granger Island Experience

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Nestled in the middle of the Maumee River in Northwest Ohio, Granger Island offers a unique paddling and camping experience. A unique way to connect people with nature, Granger Island is one of only six camping opportunities along the recently designated 108 mile Maumee River Water Trail and the only one that offers a primitive island experience. Accessed primarily by canoe or kayak, the 30-acre island consists of two tent platforms and a primitive cabin available for overnight reservations. Built in partnership with a Penta Career Center, a local public vocational school, the 434 square-foot cabin features a wood burning stove, dinette, two sofas, full-size bed, sleeping loft, composting toilet, and an attached deck.

The project utilized a partnership with Penta for volunteer labor without which the project would have not been completed. The partnership served a mutually beneficial purpose of advancing agency goals while providing a hands-on learning experience for carpentry students. Due to unpredictable water levels, access to the site was limited much of the time to foot, making transporting the materials challenging. Because there is no electricity, generators and battery-powered tools were used making the project more difficult than a standard build. The students not only came away from this project with better carpentry skills but also learned great lessons in overcoming adversity.

Like all Maumee River islands, Granger Island is susceptible to annual flooding. With the structures elevated on stilts and positioned on a natural ridge, the threat of flooding was mitigated while still providing paddlers a unique opportunity to interact with one of the region's most significant natural resources. Not only is Granger Island a retreat, it's also an educational opportunity. Maps and interpretative content on the island educate visitors on the water trail, outdoor ethics, common paddling hazards and safety tips.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class I

Nominee: Howard Marsh

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Prior to European settlement, there were 300,000 acres of coastal wetlands in Lake Erie's western basin. Today, only 31,000 acres remain, making restoration a top priority with Lake Erie's ongoing water quality crisis. In 2008, Metroparks Toledo purchased a 987-acre active farm near the shores of Lake Erie. By restoring 700 acres of high-quality habitat, Howard Marsh Metropark helps achieve regional water quality objectives and creates new world-class recreational opportunities for birding, boating, fishing and hunting. When the park opened in April 2018, it immediately became a premiere destination for birders and other outdoor enthusiasts, attracting 10,000 people in the first 10 days.

There were initial concerns from some neighboring residents that restoring wetlands might exacerbate flooding. Through collaboration with local officials, Metroparks was able to enhance local drainage by decommissioning an 80-year-old pump station and replacing it with two new state-of-the-art pump stations to direct flow into the new marsh, increasing safety from floods.

The park's unique design immerses park visitors into a total wetland experience with a spectacular 360 degree view of three interconnected marshland units interspersed with nine restored upland habitat islands. All three wetland units and two habitat islands are interconnected through hiking trails with easy access portage structures.

This is the single largest wetland restoration project completed under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Achieved metrics include: 1) 571 acres of new restored coastal wetlands and 116 acres of new upland habitat (including 7,500 new trees); and 2) 6 miles of deep water channels and 6.6 miles of new hiking trails and boardwalks

The complexity of a project of this scope is truly remarkable, and is a case study in what can be accomplished when local, state and federal agencies work together towards common goals of habitat restoration, water quality improvement, and public access.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class I

Nominee: Stark Parks Wildlife Conservation Center

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Marketing Assistant

Nominee's Organization: Stark Parks, Ohio

Population: 372,542

Wildlife rehabilitation in Stark County began in the mid-1980s when a young orphaned squirrel was brought to Stark Parks and the story made it onto the front page of the local newspaper. Being essentially unequipped to care for wildlife at the time, a handful of passionate individuals scraped by with limited funds, and operated in a 2,000-square-foot building in Perry Township, Ohio, caring for animals until they could be released back to the wild. For 30 years, wildlife recovery happened in this building. As rehabilitation efforts grew over the years, so did a vision for an animal care center that would be a hub of research, conservation, and education.

With the celebration of the park district's 50th anniversary, construction began on a new wildlife center in April 2017. The 9,405-square-foot, \$3 million facility was planned thoughtfully with careful measures and impressive features to ensure that this new space would blend with the surrounding environment. Green features abound throughout the building, beginning with the high-quality, local materials used in construction intended for reduced maintenance requirements. Cisterns collect water for reuse, and stormwater quality is managed and drained by bioswales around the building. Glass in the windows includes a ceramic frit in an effort to help prevent birds from striking the building. Modern skylights reduce the need for electric lighting, and also improve an animal's transition back outside by regulating their natural circadian rhythm.

The grand opening of the Wildlife Conservation Center was held on June 9, 2018. Over 500 visitors turned out to tour the facility, meet wildlife, and celebrate a new step for preservation in Stark County. With the new building, Stark Parks is now better equipped than ever for wildlife rehabilitation, with the ultimate goal of returning the animals cared for back to the wild.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Borrego Springs Civic Complex: Park, Library and Sheriff's Office

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of San Diego Parks and Recreation, California

Population: 3,337,685

Borrego Springs is a desert community in unincorporated San Diego County, two hours northeast of the City of San Diego in the Anza-Borrego Desert. After the Board of Supervisors allocated funding in November 2015, the County of San Diego completed construction of a new Borrego Springs Civic Complex project offering a 16-acre public park, 14,000 square foot library, and 1,600 square foot Sheriff's office in December 2018. This project enjoys overwhelming public support and a central location for community gathering and learning.

This project provides new diverse recreational and educational opportunities that did not previously exist. The new park includes a playground with mister, amphitheater, tennis/pickle ball court, basketball court, fitness stations, bocce court, volleyball court, picnic areas, dog park and trails. The project goal was to provide expanded and modern infrastructure to meet the needs of this underserved community, while taking advantage of common infrastructure to minimize environmental impact and reduce costs. Volunteers from the library, community sponsor groups, local school district, and other stakeholder groups participated in project planning and design through extensive public outreach resulting in overwhelming community support.

The combination of a park, library, and Sheriff's office in one location makes this project unique, but the complex also incorporated innovative design elements. The project's design theme honors Borrego Springs' dark skies and stargazing. The complex is unified with cohesive architecture and natural color palette around a planetary-focused theme. A central spine called the Walk of the Cosmos begins with the sun at the library, included all our solar system's planets and ends with Pluto at the dog park. An observatory pad in the heart of park is aligned with the North Star to orient stargazers. This new, innovative civic complex provides the Borrego Springs community with a safe, centralized campus for learning, exploring, engaging, and recreating.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Brecksville Trailside Program Center

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation is the largest and one of the most visited of Cleveland Metroparks 18 park reservations. The reservation's highlight is the Brecksville Nature Center, one of the most historic buildings in Cleveland Metroparks 101 year history. The nature center is the last of Cleveland Metroparks three original trailside museums, and first opened in 1939 as a WPA era Trailside Museum. In 2017, Brecksville Nature Center served nearly 30,000 guests through programs within a limited 1,000 square feet space. Cleveland Metroparks needed more space to accommodate growing demand and continue the park district's mission to promote education, recreation and conservation.

The new 1,540 square foot Brecksville Trailside Program Center pays homage to the Brecksville Nature Center and has hosted more than 100 programs since it opened. Interior finishes are made from the same Wormy American Chestnut as was used on the original nature center. The wood was salvaged from previously razed structures within Cleveland Metroparks and repurposed into trim, wainscot, cabinets and shelving, which further ties the two buildings together aesthetically. The Trailside Program Center is able to offer year-round programming for all ages including wildlife programs, nature inspired arts and crafts, primitive skills lessons, lectures about wildlife and more. Additional site enhancements as part of the project included the construction of four heated, single occupant, flushable toilet facilities and the installation of a half mile of sanitary and water lines.

Construction of the Trailside Program Center was a collaboration between Cleveland Metroparks building trades and outside contractor. Total investment for the improvements was approximately \$750,000 including \$335,000 in donations. The Brecksville Nature Center and Trailside Program Center together serve as a place for people to gather and extend their experience of the reservation by being introduced to the beauty of nature that awaits discovery.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Burke Lake Golf Center

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

In 2011, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) commissioned a study of the Burke Lake Golf Center by the National Golf Foundation (NGF). The report determined that improvements should focus on the driving range and enhanced programming and promotion of the range and features. To address the findings and allow for year-round play, the renovation project was planned to include a two-story, 64 station covered, heated driving range structure and new clubhouse. To attract beginning and social golfers and enhance the play of seasoned players, plans also included Burke Lake Golf Academy for lessons, classes and camps and two event rental areas. The project began in October 2016 and was completed in December 2017. The \$7,160,000 project was financed by voter-approved Park Bonds.

The new facility provided upgraded ADA accessibility features, including fully accessible counters, seating, restrooms, accessible pathways for the clubhouse, driving range and parking lot and accessible hitting stations, benches and ball dispensers. At 4,200 square feet, today's clubhouse (double the size of the original), features an outdoor patio, updated food and beverage and dining area, modernized pro shop and Wi-Fi. The facility remained open during the renovation to maximize revenue and minimize disruption to customers. The project focused on sustainability using water reduction practices and storm water for irrigation for water efficiency, energy efficient HVAC, water heaters, motion and daylight sensors and LED lighting to reduce the electric and energy performance.

Following an extensive marketing campaign, revenues from April to December of 2017 were up nearly a quarter-million dollars over the same period in 2016. The Burke Lake Golf home page generated 43,904 views - a 25% increase from the previous year. The facility has been featured in Parks and Business Magazine and named a Top 50 Public Range by the Golf Range Association of America.

<https://golfrange.org/2018-graa-top-50-public-facilities/>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/burke-lake-golf-center-psa>

<https://www.parksandrecbusiness.com/articles/2018/6/going-fore-green?rq=burke%20lake%20golf>

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Deputy Brandon Coates Community Park

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Orange County Parks and Recreation Division, Florida

Population: 1,348,975

Opening on July 30, 2016, the 27.2-acre Deputy Brandon Coates Community Park (3815 Substation Road, Orlando, Florida) was a vast improvement on this odd-shaped, mile-wide parcel that is part of a power line corridor and was not otherwise desirable for development.

Located along the south side of the Deerfield neighborhood, Deputy Brandon Coates Community Park is the first among Orange County's 103 parks and facilities to have a large concrete skate park; at a public meeting in January 2014, approximately 50 youth who skateboard, skate and bike, attended a meeting to express their desire to have this amenity. The park also features multipurpose fields, a playground, restrooms and office space.

Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs Office paid an artist \$30,000 to create a giant skateboard shade with large pink wheels and benches painted with a graffiti design; the shade, a welcome refuge from the Florida sun, is located on the south side of the skate park and is an eye-catching feature when driving by on the 417 roadway.

The property cost was \$900,000 and project cost was \$3.2 million. Because Deputy Brandon Coates was an Orange County deputy who died in the line of duty, the Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association Security and Safety Council purchased a green bench for \$864 with a memorial plaque on it, reminding the public of his sacrifice for community safety; the bench is located next to the playground.

At the grand opening, the Deputy's widow, local officials, the County Sheriff and many Deputies and friends were on hand to celebrate.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Deputy Scott Pine Community Park

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Orange County Parks and Recreation Division, Florida

Population: 1,348,975

Opening on February 10, 2018, the 19.5-acre Deputy Scott Pine Community Park in Windermere, Florida, was built in a first-ever partnership with Orange County Public Schools (OCPS). The facility was dedicated to Deputy Pine, who was killed in the line of duty while serving the citizens of Orange County.

OCPS' Windermere High School (opened for 2017-18) and the Orange County Parks and Recreation Division joined forces to build Deputy Scott Pine Community Park because the nearby high school property was not large enough to include a stadium. The park, located approximately one mile from the high school, includes two fields: one for multi-purpose recreation for both school and public use, and the other for the Windermere High School football and track stadium, including bleachers, a concession building with restrooms and a parking lot. The Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association Security and Safety Council paid \$864 for a green bench and memorial plaque, reminding the public of his sacrifice for community safety.

Orange County's INVEST program, which allotted \$20 million for the development of new parks or the improvement of existing parks and facilities, matched funds of \$3.7 million with the same amount from OCPS for construction of the stadium; the total budget was \$9,137,601. Construction began in mid-2017.

At the grand opening, the Deputy's widow and three children, local officials, the County Sheriff and many Deputies and friends were on hand to celebrate.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Estrella Mountain Regional Park Remodel

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Dept., Arizona

Population: 4.17 million (2015)

Estrella Mountain Regional Park entered Maricopa County's regional park system in 1954. The park initially contained 828 acres, 428 of purchased property and 400 acres of leased land. For the first five years, the park was considered a community park. By 1962, the park had grown to 19,803 acres, and the facilities and infrastructure had been limited to the northern area of the park to ensure the parks pristine desert landscape remained undisturbed. In 2008, the park received a new LEED Nature Center where visitors can attend interpretive classes and events, enjoy critter displays, and purchase retail items. Several years later in 2015, the parks outdated playground system was replaced by a stunning nature themed playground. Aside from ongoing maintenance to keep the facilities up and running, improvements at the park have been minimal due to a lack of funding.

In 2018, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors allocated funding for several key projects based on a recently revised park master plan to help revitalize Estrella Mountain Regional Park. Renovations at the park included:

- Demolished and replaced eleven existing ramadas that were over 30-years and structurally compromised due to aging with modern ramadas with extended concrete pads and natural rock pillars, state of the art grill stations, LED lighting and ample electrical outlets.
- Constructed a one-mile barrier-free cement pathway that not only linked the ramadas together, but also provided access to the Super Playground and pathway for those with mobility devices and strollers to enjoy.
- Improved ten acres of turf, added new hardscape and landscape materials and planted more than 250 native trees around the Super Playground, walking path and turf area. In addition, improvements were made to the irrigation system, which allows for open play in the more than ten acre renovated turf area.
- Replaced the parks antiquated water system and made improvements to the xeriscape irrigation system. Several domestic water line valves and backflow preventers were replaced to help improve water deliver and maintenance of the system.
- Resealed existing parking lots, new lot stripes and recurbing and added a large new parking lot and access road to the Super Playground.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: French Regional Park Play Area

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Three Rivers Park District, Minnesota

Population: 825,552

After nearly 30 years, the play area at French Regional Park in Plymouth, Minnesota, was due for replacement. At the project team kickoff meeting, Three Rivers Park District staff emphasized the need for community engagement at the front end of the project, before the design phase, and stressed the importance of designing to the public's expectations. A theme rose to the surface: the play area is primarily used by kids; therefore, kids should have an integral voice in the concept, design, and development. Staff determined the best opportunity would be to engage a third-grade elementary school class and charted a course of workshops over a two-year period, from engagement and design to construction and culminating with the opening of the play area in late summer 2018. The goals of the partnership were to gather insight from youth to design and build a better project, to educate from a unique perspective by teaching project management in a park setting, and to provide career modeling and mentors for diverse youth.

Along the way, the youth and the community as a whole provided insightful feedback that was used in the design process for the new play area. By an overwhelming margin, people said they wanted the new play area to incorporate the same signature feature as the previous play area: cargo nets for climbing between levels of the play area. Staff and the project consultant SRF worked with Landscape Structures Inc. to develop a custom play area that featured nets as its centerpiece. The new play area also offered a greater level of accessibility - the level approximately seven feet off the ground is accessible for wheelchair users. The new play area opened in August 2018 and feedback from play area users and the community has been overwhelmingly positive.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Lake Isabella Campground

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Great Parks of Hamilton County, Ohio

Population: 813,822

Lake Isabella Campground is located alongside the Little Miami State & National Scenic River, with access to a 28-acre fishing lake and nearby 78-mile, state-renowned Little Miami Scenic Trail. The campground was created with sustainability in mind, as well as use by families, paddlers, anglers and trail users alike.

The idea for the project was the result of a successful family overnight event that sold out annually at the park. The area provides an ideal location for activities with a playground, canoe/kayak access, fishing and open space for play.

Construction on the 24-site campground began in June of 2017 with little impact to parkland. No trees were removed and an existing parking area was utilized. Also, no electric was installed and grey water containment systems were placed to reduce impact to the river. Each tent-camping site includes a small gravel pad and recycled aluminum picnic tables. The most unique feature is its design of four sites around a communal fire ring, encouraging social interaction among campers. The campground also includes two accessible sites. The project was completed in April 2018.

In its first season, the campground filled nearly 300 sites over 17 weekends, and the communal fire ring was a hit for those wanting a group camping experience. The online reservation system also helped to make the process of making reservations simple.

Overall, the campground has opened up new recreational opportunities. For paddlers, it is a pit stop while heading down the river. For anglers, it provides a place to stay for fishing and tournaments. For families, it provides access to recreational opportunities, special events and a chance to spend quality time together outdoors.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: O'Brien Park Recreation Center Renovation

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Tulsa County Parks Department, Oklahoma

Population: over 500,000

Built in 1964, the O'Brien Park Recreation Center is located at the north edge of Tulsa County in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It is operated and maintained by the Tulsa County Parks Department - the only county parks department in the state of Oklahoma. For years, visitors had complained that the rooms were too small for larger group rentals, campers were cramped and the overall appearance of the facility was "old and tired". In 2016, pool usage averaged only 9 paid swimmers a day during the 61 days it was open. On January 31, 2017 commissioners, park staff, architects and planners met with the public to review design options for the renovated recreation center and new splash pad - the community was thrilled.

O'Brien Park Recreation Center officially re-opened its doors [grand re-opening invitation: <https://youtu.be/f90DEyJa6h8>] to the public on August 18, 2018 after an 18 month, \$2.1 million renovation from the Vision Tulsa tax renewal package [Progress video: <https://youtu.be/UYtSqBZ1t6k>]. Improvements included reception area, new offices, expanded multi-purpose rooms, storage, ADA/family restroom, fitness center, landscaping, parking lot and new state-of-the-art splash pad. [Refer to documentation here: <http://www.parks.tulsacounty.org/NACPRO>]

The most obvious success of the renovation has been the new splash pad; there were more visitors to the splash pad in the first week of its opening than were swimmers the entire month of August 2017. Although the newly renovated O'Brien Park Recreation Center has been open only 7 months, it has been well received by the community it serves. The Tulsa County Parks Department looks forward to another 55 years of serving the residents of North Tulsa County.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Palm Beach County Junior Golf Card

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Palm Beach County Golf, Florida

Population: 1.4 million

Golf has a long held reputation of being an expensive, elitist sport. The cost to practice, play, and purchase equipment has made golf historically cost prohibitive for a large portion of our community. The Palm Beach County Junior Golf Card (PBCJGC) provides affordable opportunities for children to learn and play the game of golf. The PBCJGC is available to any child who is 18 years or younger for a price of \$50 or \$150 per year. The card includes unlimited walking rounds of golf at Osprey Point Golf Course, Park Ridge Golf Course, Okeehelie Golf Course, Southwinds Golf Course, and John Prince Golf Learning Center; free junior club rental; and 1,000 practice range balls per year or 3,000 per month. Throughout the year, cardholders are able to participate in events at no charge such as a long drive contest, a Pro-Junior event, and a summer series of 2-person scramble events with prizes.

The program began at the urging of one of our golf professionals, Mary-Lee Cobick, and was implemented by the then Golf Operations Supervisor, Paul Connell, in 2013. Ms. Cobick noticed that many of our junior golfers' participation dropped off when they reached the age of 15-16. At this age, junior golfers were getting more independence and had more influence on how they spent their free time. The Junior Golf Card provides them the opportunity and freedom to spend time on their own or with their friends practicing and playing golf. Since inception, over 940 cards have been purchased.

A low cost program that allows unlimited access to practice and play golf, with no need to invest in expensive equipment is unprecedented. When parents learn about it, they are surprised at how affordable it is for their child to continue practicing and playing a sport they've grown to love.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: Special Events at Pools and Beaches

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Westchester County Parks, New York

Population: 962,000

Overview:

Westchester County Parks features three sandy beaches and five pristine pools that are enjoyed by thousands of residents every summer. A series of special events at the pools and beaches, featuring Family Fun Days, Public Safety Days, a Sand Castle Contest and an evening Pool Parties with Movies, spice up the long, hot summer days with family-oriented activities designed to get everyone off the beach blanket and get moving.

Description:

Family Fun Days provide an afternoon of DJ music and dance, a water balloon toss and balloon artist, magic show, face painting and prize wheel. Public Safety Days are an annual salute to local firefighters and police. A public safety officer chats with kids about his/her job, and brings an official vehicle for kids to climb inside and experience. Teams use shovels, pails, molds of every size and shape and most important, their creativity when they compete in the Sand Castle Contest at Glen Island Beach. These days are typically held on Saturday afternoons when maximum crowds are expected to turn out and be part of the fun. The concessionaire also offers food specials to entice hungry revelers. After paid entry to the facility there is no charge to participate in the daytime events. Evening Pool Parties are held after regular hours weekly at 7 p.m., allowing residents to access the pool for a nighttime swim. A popular family movie follows the extended-day swim. A small fee is charged and families can bring a picnic or purchase food from the concessionaire.

Results:

These Special Events at the Pools and Beaches have proven very popular as an enhancement to residents' experiences at the pools and beach during the season. Many follow the events from pool to pool, providing an incentive to try out a new facility each week. The series also provides an additional source of revenue and makes use of the facilities during hours when they would typically be closed.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: The Don Knabe Norwalk Golf Center

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation, California

Population: 10 million

With a low-performing golf course hemorrhaging its budget, the City of Norwalk was no longer able to continue its operation. However, with some vision, determination, and creative strategizing, the County was able to come to an agreement with the City which saved, reimagined, and reopened this underutilized asset in breathtaking fashion. Today, the facility is a vanguard, not just for the game of golf, but also for the principles of community, serenity, and discipline which the game represents.

The challenges of taking over the property had been threefold: 1) bringing the facility up to the caliber expected of the largest municipal golf course in the country; 2) persuading the surrounding community of its benefits; 3) introducing elements that would both increase interest in the game of golf as well as provide open-space access to low-income residents.

To address the first of these challenges, the Department hired the landscape architecture firm of RJM Design Group and the golf course architecture firm of Rainville-Bye to design a new course. From that, a new, challenging nine-hole course and two-story driving range were built. Second, addressing the community's concerns - increased traffic, night light pollution, and safety - the Department's design preempted community outcry by proactively instead of reactively including the necessary design features, which were communicated through a host of methods, from social media to City Council meetings. Lastly, the Department was able to approach this project as a community benefit instead of an outright revenue generator, initiating the County's first Junior Golf Academy with low fees to encourage participation by low-income youth, as well as including an educational element, thanks in part to the 15 computers donated by the City of Norwalk. The center also boasts college preparatory classes and financial assistance seminars to teach high schoolers about the college application process.

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Park & Recreation Facility - Class II

Nominee: The Meadows at Millennium Park

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Kent County Parks, Michigan

Population: 600,000

The Meadows is a 50-acre development within Millennium Park. Prior to acquiring the property, the area was used for sand and gravel mining, leaving in its' wake decades of construction debris, compacted soils, and unconsolidated fill and open water. The site offered little ecological and social benefit, however it was an opportunity to transform the former mining site into a key function serving the community surrounding Millennium Park. Based on the mining and construction fill history of the site, special attention was given to restoration of soil health; increasing organic content and infiltration rates, while reducing compaction and runoff rates. Stormwater management systems were designed by utilizing bio-swales, filter strips, and rain gardens to collect, filter, and cleanse stormwater prior to entering the adjacent wetland and lake system. The landscape pallet consists of acres of low-profile and wet-to-mesic prairie, and wetland edge seed mixes along with over 500 native trees and 6,000 individual grass, sedge and forb plantings and the Idema Wetland reclamation area. One of the more dramatic non-motorized connections designed in the project is the elevated Universal Forest Products Boardwalk that soars 20' above the water, providing picturesque views of the lakes, constructed wetland, upland prairie, and nature trails below a scenic overlook of the restoration efforts.

The Meadows provides the opportunity for Millennium Park to play host for big corporate picnics, community events, adventure races, fundraising walks, and fun runs at the William F. Grant Pavilion that can seat over 300 people and the Currie Family Amphitheater, a 4-acre large-event outdoor space. Other features include restroom facilities and paved trails that complete the Fred Meijer Millennium Trail Network. The Meadows provides a much-needed separate space from the main recreation area of Millennium Park, which is located directly across the street.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class I

Nominee: Beauty Beyond Boundaries

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Columbus Parks and Recreation, Georgia

Population: 200,000

Beauty Beyond Boundaries is a program designed to enable young girls to recognize and exercise their inner beauty and strengths. This program held at Midland Academy After School Program teaches participants that contrary to world beliefs, beauty is beyond skin deep and comes from within and that when used in proper context, can become a powerful tool that will allow them to set and achieve any and all goals. They will be taught that outer beauty will fade and that the inner beauty may create a legacy can last for centuries and beyond.

Beauty Beyond Boundaries teaches participants to recognize their value and self-worth. This is important so that they can withstand and overcome peer-pressure and bullying. In today's society this has become an important factor, with child/teenage suicide on the rise over recent years. They are taught the difference between hurtful and helpful words, and how to use social media in a helpful rather than harmful manner. Participants are also taught the importance of setting goals and believing in oneself. Participants engage in activities that boost confidence and self-esteem and are taught that even when faced with adversities and failures, it is important to regroup and set forth on another plan in order to achieve their goal(s).

Lastly, participants are also taught social etiquette, manners, and acceptable codes of conduct when in social settings. By practicing these skills, they are preparing themselves for success and presenting themselves in a professional and respectable manner. Beauty Beyond Boundaries' goal is to encourage young girls to push past what's ordinary to become that which is extraordinary, and we are proud to nominate Midland Academy's After School program for the NACPRO Program Award.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class I

Nominee: Chester Center's Media Match

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Columbus Parks and Recreation Department, Georgia

Population: 200,000

The Chester Center's MEDIA MATCH Program was designed to introduce the participants to members of our local media. As a facilitator of the Chester's Boys and Girls Mentoring program, I strongly encouraged students to engage in public speaking sessions. As the "Voice" of the Muscogee County School District Athletics, I attend many of the kid's sporting events. They would hear and see me and were inquisitive as to how and why I began announcing. Capitalizing on this opportunity, I rewarded students by having them as my guests in the press box or courtside. Follow-ups included reviews that were both oral and written. Being in the presence of recognizable media personalities, reporters and cameramen afforded the students opportunities to make their interests known and possibly seek careers in journalism as well as internships and possible college scholarships. Students have had the opportunity to see both sides of media from being the student who came straight off the field or court and was interviewed as well as being the one during the actual interviews. Students are exposed and able to do mock interviews as practice from both sides of the camera. This has not only allowed students to be prepared when that moment came for them after the big game as well as to further explore the opportunities that were available as careers.

The public response has been extremely favorable. Our local media personalities have readily given of their time and talents in support of this program. MEDIA MATCH participants are continuing the legacy by learning game preparation, roster study and correct name pronunciation. Voice tone and announcer temperament and professionalism are also emphasized. Students who once may have only seen playing sports as an opportunity for careers now see that there more opportunities beyond the playing field.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class I

Nominee: Escape The Manor House

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Escape the Manor House started in January 2017 with the purpose of reaching a different and underserved audience. Escape programs are very popular with young adults—a population that Metroparks did not often reach. We have the luxury of using the Stranahan Estate - a 34,000 sq ft mansion equipped with 34 rooms. This is a very unique use of a space that usually sees mainly adults over age 55.

Metroparks put this program on Facebook with the hope of filling 60 spots. There were over 2,500 people interested and the 60 spots quickly grew to 205 paying participants with a demand for more than we could accommodate. We were happy to see that 36% of our participants were ages 18-35, over 14% of that demographic than any of our other programs.

At the end of each program, a survey link is emailed to each participant. A question on the survey was, "how would you grade the program," where response choices range from A-F. Over 90% responded with "A". Overall, Metroparks wants to have 90% of people "recommend the program", and 100% of people did for Escape.

Our secondary goal of this program was to expose a new group of people to Metroparks. The survey also asks, "Have you attended Metroparks programs before?" Our other programs during this time of January-March 2018 reported 18% surveyed are first-time program attendees. 52% of those surveyed from the Escape program were first-time attendees!

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Park & Recreation Program - Class I

Nominee: Grandparent/Grandchild Summer Camp

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

The Department's first-ever intergenerational program was the Grandparent/Grandchild Summer Day Camp held in July 2018. This history-themed camp was a collaboration between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Chesterfield Historical Society. Participants journeyed back to the late 18th century with archeology activities, housekeeping duties, farming, house-building and colonial games. They learned about early use of canals, the importance of grist mills along the river, and the importance of tobacco, Virginia's first cash crop. Construction and masonry styles as well as techniques to make a mud daub house were also explored. Children participated in militia drills, learning how colonial soldiers trained and marched during the American Revolution.

This camp was held at Castlewood, an early 19th century house that is used as offices by the Chesterfield Historical Society. The grandparent/grandchild pair paid \$100 for the three-day camp. Activities were specifically planned to enhance the bonding between the campers and their grandparent, as well as to explore the history of Chesterfield County.

This first-time venture into intergenerational programs proved successful. There were 18 participants. A few grandparents attended from outside the state, including from New York and North Carolina. Feedback from participants included the following:

- Good balance of educational and fun activities
- It was all great
- Liked watching my granddaughter enjoy learning
- Very satisfied with the camp
- Would like more camps

This camp combined a unique blend of historical interpretation with the fun of a summer camp, then added the intergenerational component. Because of the success of this camp and collaboration with the Historical Society, the department is planning to offer this camp again and explore other intergenerational programming opportunities.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class I

Nominee: Summer Basketball League

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority, Georgia

Population: 115,489

The Summer High School Basketball program offered at-risk teens a positive activity during the summer months. The teens involved live in an underserved area and may face challenges associated with low socio-economic status. Youth teams played with and against adult teams made of elected officials and government employees, including firefighters.

Private donors gave a total of \$6,000 to pay for the league including for a uniform for each participant, ensuring the boys had no participation barriers. VLPRA held 30 regular season games and a single elimination playoff. Local police officers donated their time to monitor the games and to talk to the participants between match ups.

The result was bigger than basketball: participants developed self-discipline, integrity, and the concept of teamwork. Many of the teens were unable to play in school leagues; some were even in alternative school because of poor choices. This league was an opportunity to reward positive choices and good behavior. There were several teachable moments. In fact, when one participant got rowdy, the ref took him off to the side and spoke to him about respecting himself and others through his actions. The participant composed himself and continued playing. The teenagers were able to form lasting bonds with elected officials, firefighters, and police officers. These adults mentored the teens, showing them the importance of setting goals and taking steps to achieve them. The relationships formed set the stage for the teenagers to evade dangers like drugs or gang activity. This league gave them the opportunity and knowledge to know that they can work together as a team for a common goal. The community benefits as these participants can be examples to other teenagers in our area with similar struggles. And both adults and teenagers got the advantage of exercise and a healthy, camaraderie building activity.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class I

Nominee: Tree Climbing

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Metroparks Toledo began their recreational tree climbing program in November 2017. Public recreation surveys have told us that residents feel they have to leave the area to pursue high adventure, so our Outdoor Skills department is working to break that assumption. Recreational tree climbing provides an outlet for high adventure that is sustainable, adaptable, but most of all, facilitates a deep connection between the participant and the natural environment. Tree climbing is a very inclusive activity. We have a series of ropes and pulleys to form a super-system that creates a 3 to 1 mechanical advantage and allows facilitators to hoist someone with physical disabilities. We also serve a wide demographic especially in age, we have had individuals from age 4 to 74 participate.

At the end of each program, a survey link is emailed out to each participant. For a recently completed survey in September 2018, there were 57. At the end of each program, a survey link is emailed to each participant. A question on the survey was, "how would you grade the program," where response choices range from A-F. The goal is to keep at least 90% of the responses at an "A" and these results came back with 91.23% giving an "A." Overall, Metroparks wants to have 90% of people "recommend the program", and 100% of people did.

There are no other established programs like this in our region. Residents wishing to try this adventure would have to travel two-three hours away. This means that we are bringing an incredibly unique opportunity to this region, adding value to Metroparks and Toledo as a whole.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class I

Nominee: Trunk or Treat Event

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

In response to citizen demand for a safe and welcoming environment for trick-or-treating, the department hosted its inaugural Trunk and Treat event in the fall of 2018. The department called upon other county agencies, community groups, and athletic associations to participate in the program. In total, 35 organizations agreed to decorate trunks and distribute candy. All participants were required to be existing county employees or complete a required background check. In addition, all candy had to be unopened and inspected before use. Police were on-site for security and traffic management. Attendance was originally anticipated to be 1,000 for this free event.

Publicity for the event included distribution of flyers in local elementary schools, ads in newspapers, and social media posts. The response to social media was extraordinary, Facebook views exceeded 67,000 with 500 shares. Staff increased their attendance estimates to 5,000 and continued to monitor public interest in the event. Considering the favorable weather conditions forecast for the day of the program, attendance projections were again increased, and materials purchased in accordance with those revised estimates.

The event was held on October 29, 2018, 6-9 p.m. Activities included hay rides, a movie, disc jockey, inflatable amusements, nature center exhibits with animals, food vendors, and decorated trunks distributing candy. Participating agencies and other organizations fully embraced the spirit of the event and created elaborate "trunks" and costumes. Community response to the event exceeded expectations. Over 10,000 people entered the fairgrounds over the course of three hours. Staff's revised attendance estimates ensured that there was enough candy available for a crowd of that size. The cooperative spirit of the attendees and other county departments made the event a tremendous success. It was rewarding to see the children enjoying a family-friendly evening. Public feedback following the event was positive.

The department is planning the 2019 event with ideas for enhancements.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: Adopt-A-Turtle - Community Engagement/Expanding Donor Base

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Lake County Forest Preserve District, Illinois

Population: 750,000

The Adopt-a-Turtle program invites the public to connect directly with the Lake County Forest Preserves and make a personal investment in it.

Spring Bluff Forest Preserve is home to Illinois' largest population of Blanding's turtles. Viability models revealed nearly 100% chance of extinction within 50 years if nothing were done. To address the threat, we launched the Blanding's Turtle Recovery Program. The plan has four strategies: habitat restoration and management; predator control; public education and awareness; and a head-starting program to rear newborn turtles in captivity until they reach a viable size.

The Adopt-a-Turtle program was developed to generate resources and grow public education and awareness. The goal was to secure \$12,000 in the first year of the program, which meant 100 Turtle Champions at \$120. Turtle Champions can name their adopted turtle, receive a personalized Turtle Adoption Profile, take a behind-the-scenes tour to meet their turtle, and receive updates when their turtle is released and whenever it is located in the wild. Champions can learn about the program, watch videos, and give online:

<https://www.lcfpd.org/preservation-foundation/adopt-a-turtle/>

The \$12,000 goal is reset each year. Many donors give Turtle Championship as a gift. For example, a grandparent will make a donation for a grandchild, and name the turtle for the child or encourage the child to name it. The program has secured 264 donors in three years. The demonstrated interest and direct personal investment in Adopt-a-Turtle are powerful statements of its importance to the public.

- Total raised over the three seasons, as of 2/27/19: \$46,469 (29% over goal, which was \$12,000/year, or \$36,000)
- Total number of donations: 402
- Total number of donors: 264
- Number of donors whose first gift was to this program: 219 (83% - wowza!)
- Number of donors who have made two or more gifts to the program: 78 (30%)

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: Dockless Bike Share

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois

Population: 5.2m

While market research studies reported that more than 43 million Americans rode bicycles recreationally in 2015, more than half of US adults do not have access to a bicycle at home. To address this issue, the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) worked with Bike and Roll to develop a new affordable and accessible bike rental program that would help the residents of Cook County to explore the nearly 70,000 acres of public land and 300 miles of trails that the FPCC manages. The program started with six docking stations and a total of 60 bikes available for rental. Although, the Forest Preserves saw an increase in ridership from 795 riders in 2015 to 2,306 in 2017 it was still cost prohibitive to expand the program to more areas.

Understanding the continued need for the bike share program's growth and improved access while maintaining its affordability for Cook County residents, the FPCC worked with Bike and Roll to develop a unique new vision for the program. Looking at industry trends and the availability of updated technology, a new unique dockless biking program was created, completely operated through a smart phone application. This new biking program was launched in 2018 and added 40 hubs and 240 bikes for a total of 46 hubs and 300 bikes that are now available throughout the FPCC.

The conversion to a dockless program has increased ridership by 75% and decreased the cost per hour to rent a bike from \$8 to \$5 per hour. This unique and innovative partnership between the FPCC and Bike and Roll has brought increased bike mobility access to thousands of people in the Cook County who are now able to connect and enjoy a ride through the FPCC.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: GeoTour

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Great Parks of Hamilton County, Ohio

Population: 813,822

Geocaching is essentially a treasure hunt, using GPS and navigation to find hidden caches that contain items for trading among geocachers. Interest in the activity was heightened in Cincinnati, Ohio when the national GeoWoodstock event came in May 2018.

Aware of the coming event, Great Parks of Hamilton County saw an opportunity, especially since parks are a popular spot for geocaching. With that, our team worked with GeoWoodstock representatives in April 2018 to see how Great Parks could provide geocaching during the event, which draws thousands, and after the event, for all park guests. They suggested a GeoTour, which brings geocachers to a location for a `tour` of the area. This was a new concept for Great Parks, so research was done with geocaching groups, on social media and looking at other GeoTour events.

With just a month, the team rallied to create a kick-off event at one of the parks, make passports and coins, upload information to the national geocaching website and plan promotion. Trails were also chosen, including beginner, expert and ADA compliant, and geocaches were placed.

The team divided and conquered on May 26, 2018, by having a booth at the GeoWoodstock event to promote the GeoTour and a kick-off event. That day, approximately 200 people visited the booth at GeoWoodstock and over a dozen stopped by the kick-off. The most impressive impact was after the event in August 2018, when people from all over the world, including Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and more, had "checked in" on the national site at a Great Park. In fact, more than 11,000 finds had been logged and over 300 coins had been awarded for each trail!

Overall, the GeoTour was considered a success and plans are to host another, incorporating nature education and obtaining more staff and volunteers for help.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: Girls Empowerment Conference

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation, California

Population: 10 million

While hashtags like #thefutureisfemale have seen a recent proliferation in social media, the Girls Empowerment Conference has been embodying that spirit since 2015. Formed to engage girls ages 11-17 in topics like technology, leadership, advocacy, research, fundraising and marketing, the program has grown from 80 girls in its inaugural year to boasting over 1,000 in 2018.

The conference gives girls and young women the opportunity to hear from and be inspired by industry experts who understand the challenges they currently face and the potential obstacles to their successful future. Through inspiring presentations, panels, and networking opportunities tailored to all levels and areas of responsibility, the conference allows girls to leave with new insights and concrete strategies to further their personal value proposition and achievements.

In 2018, conference participation also boasted representation from across the county, with all of the Department of Recreation's field agencies represented - North, South, and East. With the theme of "Educate-Inspire-Empower", the Department's South Agency included breakout sessions included topics such as School and Career, Dream Big (goal setting), H.E.R (Healing is Everyone's Right) and Self Defense. The East and North agencies brought together partners such as the Los Angeles Community College District, Cal State Northridge, Planned Parenthood and the Red Cross to help broaden the teens' perspectives on education, employment, and health.

Providing key role models, the conference has also boasted keynote speakers the likes of Los Angeles Sparks President and Chief Operation Officer, Christine N. Simmons, 15-year veteran of the Los Angeles County public defender's office, Tiffany Blacknell, and the Department's own Chief Deputy Director, Norma E. Garcia, who was also the 2018 woman of the year for California's 22nd senate district.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: Golf in Schools

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Great Parks of Hamilton County, Ohio

Population: 813,822

Golf in Schools is a new Great Parks of Hamilton County winter outreach program that began in February 2018. The program aims to introduce children who may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience the game of golf and its benefits.

Golf has been proven to be a great child development tool that leads to positive lifelong habits, including physical activity, strengthening personal skills (decision making, self-esteem, etc.), family involvement, socialization, etiquette, values and simply spending more time outdoors.

Golf in Schools was offered to students in 4th-6th grade (in some cases 3rd-8th grade based on school schedules), through physical education classes at eight schools in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. PGA Professionals with Great Parks handled instruction using Starting New at Golf (SNAG) equipment. Thanks to a partnership with the Greater Cincinnati Golf Association (GCGA), students were able to use specialized clubs and balls to improve development and skills. The overall feedback from physical education teachers about the program has been very positive, many asking for it to return in winter 2019.

Golf in Schools is unique in that very few PGA Professionals are running programs like it in the country and very few, if any, are reaching the current volume of students that Great Parks is. The hope is that kids will want to continue to learn after experiencing this program, in turn coming to a Great Parks course for further practice, play and instruction.

Looking long term, there could be an opportunity for a partnership with the First Tee of Greater Cincinnati, who is looking to expand into winter school programming. A partnership such as this would greatly broaden the impact of the Golf in Schools program.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: Greater Maywood Paddling Program

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois

Population: 5.2 million

The Greater Maywood Paddling Program (GMPP) is a unique community paddling initiative that provides an economical, supportive and accessible way for organized groups to connect to nature through kayaking. While there are several examples of kayak gear lending libraries around the country, no other program partners with community groups and trains them to lead their own kayaking trips. In 2018 a pilot of the GMPP was launched and 11 community group leaders were trained and certified on kayaking, use and care of kayaking gear and how to safely lead groups on paddling field trips. Leaders have access to the onsite Kayak Gear Library which provides all the supplies needed for a group paddling trip. By providing comprehensive training in paddling, the GMPP empowers group leaders to connect their community groups to nature through outdoor recreation experiences.

The GMPP is a program of the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) and is supported by the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH). Through CCDPH the FPCC received a grant from CBS EcoMedia to better connect local communities with nature and be more physically active. The Village of Maywood expressed interest in improving access to healthy outdoor activities and requested the development of a paddling launch in their community. Based on this interest, Maywood Grove Forest Preserves was selected for the program site, situated along the Des Plaines River in Maywood, IL.

In 2018 there were a total of 17 partner led paddling trips and 15 public programs with 527 participants. GMPP has exceeded its goals and the FPCC is already recruiting more community partners to participate in its 2019 season and hopes to expand to other interested communities across Cook County in the future. The GMPP was recently awarded a 2018 Project Excellence Award from the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: Riverside County Healthy Living Extravaganza

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space District, California

Population: 2.2 Million

The Riverside County Healthy Living Extravaganza Event (HLE) is a collaboration between agency partners (Riverside County, City of Jurupa Valley, City of Riverside, Jurupa Area Recreation & Park District, Reach Out, and more) with a goal of providing a family friendly event where participants can obtain information and resources related to living a healthy lifestyle. Through the support of partners, donors, sponsors, staff, and volunteers, HLE provides an opportunity for the public to expand their knowledge of health and wellness programs, services, and opportunities in their local communities while participating in an interactive and exciting day of activities.

HLE activities were developed by partners who were able to utilize the resources of their individual agencies to recruit more than 100 vendors offering kid's activities, health screenings, health products, and information about programs and services in the local communities. With the support of financial sponsors for HLE, the event was also able to provide a Kid's Fun Zone, which included a petting zoo, train ride, bounce houses, climbing wall, and arts and crafts station, and a live band. Each year, participation has continued to grow, with more than 1300 guests attending in 2018.

With the support of sponsors and donors, HLE is provided free of charge to the community. More than \$10,000 annually have been contributed for the execution of the event in addition to the staff hours provided by all of the partner agencies. Over 50 volunteers donated their time in 2018 on the day of the event to support the operation. Their skills were put to use for traffic control, vendor support, set-up, tear down, clean-up, kid's zone monitors, arts and crafts attendants, and more.

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: SD Nights (San Diego/Safe Destination Nights)

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of San Diego Parks and Recreation, California

Population: 3.3 Million

SD Nights (San Diego/Safe Destination Nights) provides teenagers with a safe place for recreation and enrichment during critical hours. The program was developed by the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), in partnership with the Departments of Probation, Sheriff's, and Health and Human Services (HHS), and is intended to build safe communities and reduce youth gang and criminal activity.

Relevant topics are discussed at each event, such as planning for college/careers, gang prevention, and drug/alcohol awareness. Probation and Sheriff's Departments refer youth to the program, and bring officers to the events, which provides teens with a positive interaction with public safety officers.

Partnerships have been established with cities, schools and non-profit organizations. Partner organizations provide a facility for the program, and the County provides the staff, supplies, and services. Since July 2018, over 4,000 teens have attended 141 events spanning 13 locations, and over 200 events will take place by June 2019.

The staff leading events are comprised of lead staff and several support staff. Some of the support staff positions, deemed `LEAD (Leadership, Education, and Development) Squad` consists of youth workers as young as 15 years old. Approximately 30 youth have already been employed and we anticipate hiring an additional 20 staff this year. This is an important and unique aspect of SD Nights. In addition to assisting with the implementation of each event, they also serve as advocates of the program among their peers, and participate in a leadership course. This course includes lessons on communications, leadership, public speaking, building confidence, and community service.

Through SD Nights, we engage teens, mentoring and equipping them with the tools they need to make better decisions, build strong character, and improve their quality of life.

SD Nights website:

<http://www.sdparks.org/content/sdparks/en/news-events/news-stories/SDNights.html.html>

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Park & Recreation Program - Class II

Nominee: Stroll For Well-Being

Nominee's Title: Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens

Nominee's Organization: Palm Beach County Parks & Recreation Dept., Florida

Population: over 500,000

The Stroll for Well-Being is a therapeutic garden walking program for participants to immerse themselves in the natural beauty, peace and serenity of the gardens. In 2006, Morikami conducted a study with FAU's Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, culminating in the establishment of the Stroll for Well-Being program. In 2011, the Morikami received a grant to extend the program to participants of non-profit therapy and counseling programs who are likely to benefit from reflective walks, but were financially unable to afford this service. Research has shown that the simple act of walking in a natural environment or garden setting has positive effects on mood and outlook in individuals. The therapeutic walking program at the Morikami provides a peaceful experience in a nurturing environment that provides well-being and resilience in the face of adversity.

Participants have three group meetings with a facilitator over an 8-week period and at the first meeting, they receive their Stroll journals to help guide their experience. Participants in the program may visit the garden during museum hours as often as they wish, but are encouraged to visit at least twice a week during the first 8 weeks. The journal presents several themed walks that identify points along the way at which to pause and reflect. Some themes include awareness, trust, possibility, joy and fulfillment and are designed to elicit reflection on one's life. Space in the journal allows participants to record their thoughts on these and other topics.

Since the start of the Stroll for Well-Being, we have had over 1324 people who have registered for the program and had participants from over 35 non-profit organizations. The Morikami has also presented at 3 different conferences promoting the program, and now other gardens are using the Morikami's Stroll for Well-Being as a model for their garden space as well.

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Planning Initiative

Nominee: 2018 Parks and Rereation Master Plan

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

The 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan examines current conditions of parks, facilities, programs and operations and make recommendations for future actions, including improvements to accommodate current and future recreation needs and conservation opportunities for Chesterfield County. The plan is the guide for department and county leadership decision making, providing a prioritized framework for fiscally responsible recommendations for the park system and department's programs and services. The Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors adopted the plan in April 2018.

Over a two-year community engagement process, input from six public meetings in different geographic areas of the county, along with surveys, focus groups and on-going communication with county leadership established a baseline for community needs and directed the plan's goals. A systemwide park needs assessment based on public input, facility usage and state guidelines (the Virginia Outdoors Plan) identified recreation needs, which were aligned with existing resources to develop plan recommendations. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan provided important data to the Comprehensive Plan for the County. Our Master Plan also works together with the Bikeways and Trails Plan, which is part of the County's Public Facilities Plan.

The Master Plan sets the framework to maintain and expand a high-quality park system meeting the needs of residents and visitors. The plan addresses existing parks and facilities, trail network expansion, sports tourism, future development, improved indoor recreation and water access. Countywide recreation program improvements focus on linking programming to health initiatives, marketing and promotion, and sports tourism. Facility maintenance for aging elements in our inventory are also addressed. Incorporation of facility lifecycles and maintenance operations for sustainability of parks and recreation resources are included in the master plan. The comprehensive recommendations will fully sustain and expand parks and recreation services in Chesterfield County for years to come.

The plan is available at: <https://www.chesterfield.gov/925/Parks-Recreation-Master-Plan-Update>

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Planning Initiative

Nominee: Connect to Walk and Bike

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Morris County Park Commission, New Jersey

Population: 500,000

For four years, the Morris County Park Commission has been working with willing community partners to assess, map and recommend connections to county and local parks - a project titled Connect to Walk and Bike (CTWB). The project is at no cost to the partner. New Jersey Healthy Communities grant stipulations require the inclusion of school and public transportation as well. The grant sets strategies for healthy eating and physical activity. The project was awarded its second two-year grant in 2018. Four communities have been completed with a fifth in the works and a sixth on standby. When completed, and in coordination with other independent community trails projects, CTWB will be the basis for a county wide trail system. Demographics of the community are mapped with particular attention being paid to providing access to disparate neighborhoods. In some communities residents use bicycles to get to work and community assets. They do not own cars and cannot afford taxis or ride share services. Other communities are becoming popular for those who prefer not to own cars but want to walk to shop, work, and recreate. A committee of staff from the park system and local community, interested persons from the biking community, and county planning and health staff leads CTWB. The Nomad Group consultants completes the project work with recent graduates from an Urban Geography/GIS program. Walkability audits and windshield surveys are performed while maps, and a final report are created. The final product is recommendations for connections using sidewalks, trails, roadway enhancements, etc. to benefit the health, social connections, and economy of the communities. Partner communities have used the results to acquire construction grants, and as part of a master plan.

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Planning Initiative

Nominee: Future State - Metroparks Culture

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

The senior staff at Metroparks Toledo saw a need to assess the current culture of the organization in order to determine how to best transition to our desired future state culture. Ten, primarily non-management staff, were selected to become part of a "culture team". The team was charged with the task of conducting a culture assessment and providing recommendations on how to accomplish this transition. Metroparks wanted to align its culture with its mission and vision as well as build pride and support for the organization.

The Culture Team, formed in February 2018, carried out two large initiatives. The first was to learn from what other park systems were doing to address their concerns about culture. From that experience, Metroparks knew it was necessary to understand its current culture, so they created and conducted an all-staff survey. In addition to sending out a survey, the team knew they would need to be able to hold challenging conversations about the survey and culture with all staff. The Culture Team, along with a few selected staff, trained in the Art of Hosting facilitation technique in order to host future conversations throughout the park district.

From the survey, the Culture Team learned that there were only a few areas of concern that needed to be addressed. The Culture Team hosted large workshops at all employee, leadership and senior staff meetings to harvest and share important information about the survey and to roll-out the newly defined culture, The Metroparks Way.

Having The Metroparks Way will allow Metroparks to have a bigger appeal when hiring and will benefit employees as a tool to guide them to working toward common goals. It is a great achievement to be an organization that people want to come work for and stay working for because of a healthy culture.

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Planning Initiative

Nominee: Master Planning 18 Reservations

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

Cleveland Metroparks initiated a new internal Reservation Master Planning process in 2014. In just five years, staff have completed plans for 18 parks encompassing over 23,000 acres. The process looks at four to five master plans each year, rotating through the Park District. The resulting plans outline activities for the next two to 20 years. Previous master plan updates were performed at intervals ranging from 17 to 30 or more years; the new approach assures each plan will be revisited within ten years.

Cleveland Metroparks Planning and Design staff lead the stakeholder-driven process. Internal experts from natural resources, marketing, information technology, outdoor experiences, park management, planning and design, construction, law enforcement, development, and land protection staff develop recommendations during workshops throughout the year. Outreach to diverse external stakeholders includes public open houses, online plans and comment forms, meetings with communities surrounding these regional parks, and groups with special interests to generate feedback on a draft version of the plans. Work is finalized and presented to the Board of Park Commissioners, and final plans are available on the Park District website.

Recommended actions align with the Park District's Strategic Goals: Protection, Connections, Relevancy, Engagement, and Organizational Sustainability. This correlation helps anchor achievable actions to overarching ideas. Staff at all levels of the organization can demonstrate progress towards the goals and consequently to the agency's role in Northeast Ohio.

Cleveland Metroparks relies on up-to-date planning documents to help manage the natural resources and facilities of the Park District to serve more than 19 million guests annually. The Reservation Master Plans inform priorities for land acquisition, investment of capital funds for repairs and new improvements, renovation work performed by park crews, and resource management activities. Plans are also key to the successful pursuit of outside funding from grants, foundations, and community partners.

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Planning Initiative

Nominee: Puente Hills Landfill Park Master Plan

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation, California

Population: 10 million

The Puente Hills Landfill Park Master Plan (PHLPMP) models how agencies can create dynamic, multi-functional parks by re-envisioning former industrial sites. By harnessing concepts of urban infill, sustainable technologies, and context-sensitive solutions, over time 142 acres of the 1,365-acre site will be reclaimed as public parkland. It will become the County's first new regional park in more than 30 years, serving residents within a 25-mile radius. While transforming a 500-foot mountain of waste into a world-class park is not an entirely original concept, the PHLPMP is innovative in that it challenges the preconception that re-purposing landfill sites can only occur at a small scale and with restrained interventions.

The PHLPMP infuses the area's 142 acres with an enormous variety of passive and active recreational programmatic/infrastructural elements, designed and constructed to be "light on the land." It will serve as a regional model for sustainability, interweaving sustainable practices, natural systems, and sustainability education throughout the future park. Recycled water will be used to supplement park irrigation; minimal paving will reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff; a native plant nursery will provide on-site educational and habitat enhancement opportunities; mobile "pop-up" programming vs. resource-intensive bricks-and-mortar facilities; renewable energy systems such as solar panels and solar/electrical and electrical/natural gas hybrids will also be incorporated.

According to projections by the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050, compared to 55% currently. As the trend towards urbanization continues, increasing numbers of urban dwellers will require more and more parkland to fulfill their recreational needs. Through adaptable re-use, the Puente Hills Landfill Park provides cities across the globe a prime example of how previously negatively perceived open spaces can be transformed to create new and vital recreational opportunities.

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Planning Initiative

Nominee: Riverside County Comprehensive Trails Plan

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space District, California

Population: 2.2 Million

Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space District (District) developed its first ever Riverside County Comprehensive Trails Plan (Plan) in 2018. The Plan is meant to provide guidance for a sustainable and manageable trails network with revised mapping, updated recommendations for policies, possible ordinances, baseline trail user survey data, and suggested methods to establish a sustainable and funded maintenance program. The goal is to utilize the Plan to inform the next update to the County's General Plan Non-Motorized Circulation Element.

The District worked with ALTA Planning + Design Inc. (ALTA) to complete the Plan. ALTA and the District engaged in a public process utilizing a technical advisory committee, public meetings, and several surveys. Stakeholders and managing agencies were involved in a collaborative planning process leading to the development of this plan with clear policies, operational and maintenance requirements, implementation guidance, funding and partnership recommendations, and design standards for trail typologies appropriate for a regional trail system. The development of the Plan has involved field work, mapping and data analysis, stakeholder outreach, and surveys of best practices in California, the Southwest, and nationwide. The plan was approved in its final form on June 5, 2018.

Overall, the Plan achieves a balance between function, recreation, and the environment and provides recommendations for a sustainable, manageable, and funded program. The Plan develops a backbone trail network that is feasible, compatible with other plans, leverages trails within other jurisdictions, and closes gaps throughout the countywide trail system. It addresses the needs of the development community by providing clarity regarding trail and development requirements and makes recommendations for trail alignments as well as connectivity points to local and community trail systems throughout the County. When implemented, the Plan will provide residents with an improved trail network and system for all trail users.

Link to Plan: <https://www.rivcoparks.org/wp-content/uploads/Riverside-County-Comprehensive-Trails-Plan-FINAL-S-USE.pdf>

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Professional - Fellow

Nominee: George Page

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Executive Director

Nominee's Organization: Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority, Georgia

Population: 115,489

VLPRRA Executive Director George Page is known through the community as a leader who creates partnerships and forms relationships to improve residents' quality of life.

Most recently, he led VLPRRA in a public/private partnership to build the nation's largest Miracle Field at an Authority park. He collaborated with his board of directors and the Miracle League of Valdosta to plan and design a new complex which includes the Miracle Field, a boundless playground, and four standard fields. This incorporated local elected leaders, school systems, and non-profit organizations that all worked together for the common goal.

Page championed the growth of youth athletics, introducing new sports to the area like volleyball, and breaking enrollment records in almost all sports while transitioning to a school-based model. Mr. Page also has created joint use agreements with those schools where previously there were none. VLPRRA now has an outstanding relationship with local school systems as well as the local university, Valdosta State. The agreement allows all groups to utilize school and local fields/courts to their maximum potential. The use includes the agency's youth basketball & football programs, as well as hosting travel tournaments which have become a major contributor to the local economy. VLPRRA's facilitated tournaments resulted in more than 7,000 room nights and brought in well over \$5 million in economic impact in the last calendar year alone and continue to grow.

Page as also excelled at bridging the financial gap. When he arrived at VLPRRA eight years ago, the fund balance was approximately \$275,000. It currently sits at nearly \$4 million. That's all while renovating buildings, updating landscapes, creating new programs, purchasing much needed upgrades for our community buildings, upgrading the auto fleet, and building a basketball court, six new tennis courts, five new baseball/softball fields, and a new soccer complex.

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Professional - Fellow

Nominee: Tim Gallaher

Nominee's Title: Natural Resources Manager

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: <500,000

Tim Gallaher has over 21 years of committed service with Ohio park districts, including 16+ years with Metroparks Toledo. Tim is an innovative leader in natural resources management, and currently oversees habitat restoration and management of over 12,000 acres of parkland for Metroparks within one of the most biologically diverse areas of Ohio, including the Oak Openings region and Lake Erie Coastal Marsh region.

After he was hired by Metroparks, Tim immediately identified that many natural areas within the park district were lacking in diversity of native plants for pollinators and wildlife. Tim established the Blue Creek Native Nursery to meet this demand, and the nursery has grown to become one of the largest publicly managed native nurseries in the country. NACPRO recognized the nursery with its Operational Facilities Award for 2018.

In the area of forest management, Tim was also one of the first resource managers in Ohio to respond to the potentially catastrophic threat of oak wilt. After identifying the growing threat of this fungal pathogen at Wildwood Preserve Metropark in 2014, he quickly and methodically researched various management options, and implemented a successful management strategy using a coalition of regional landowners and stakeholders which saved thousands of oak trees at Wildwood and across the Oak Openings Region. A strong advocate for reforestation, Tim has directly overseen the planting of over 95,000 trees across the park district over the past 15 years.

Perhaps most significant of Tim's accomplishments, he is ensuring that our natural resources will be cared for into the future by mentoring the next generation of resource managers through the formation of a Stewardship Club. Under this program, high school students work side by side with Metroparks staff on habitat management projects to learn essential outdoor skills needed for a career in parks and recreation.

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Professional - Fellow

Nominee: Troy Hodges

Nominee's Title: Director

Nominee's Organization: Clayton County Parks & Recreation, Georgia

Population: 285,153

In 2018, Clayton County Parks and Recreation Department was awarded District IV Agency of the Year by Georgia Recreation & Park Association. This highly coveted award is a direct result of the dedication, leadership and efforts put forth by Director Troy Hodges.

Under his direction, the goal of the Department is to provide the community with leisure activities in a safe, well-maintained park system that currently offers approximately 1,300 acres of land, 13+ miles of walking trails, 32 parks, 4 recreational facilities, a nature preserve, 40 athletic fields, 25 tennis courts and 10 pickle ball courts. This goal is achievable only through the collective efforts of 77 full-time, 125 part-time, 132 seasonal employees, 46 instructors and more than 270 athletic volunteers annually. In addition, as director he is responsible for allocating budgetary funds of 6.2 million dollars and overseeing the logistics of projects funded by the local SPLOST. The department is currently undergoing upgrades to begin in 2019 that include a new water park, an amphitheater and a new recreation center and administration building. In addition, the trail system will be further expanded with two miles of walking paths to be completed in June 2019.

Troy serves his community as a member of the Clayton County Rotary Club, where he holds the position of Sergeant-at-Arms and President Elect. He has acquired numerous certifications, which include Certified Park and Recreation Professional and George F. Harris Executive Management Institute. Troy has been a member of GRPA for 25 years, is a United States Specialty Sports Association Area Director and is an active member of the National Park and Recreation Association. Troy led the department in receiving the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, making Clayton the first county in the state of Georgia to receive this recognition.

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Professional - Lifetime

Nominee: David Bowden

Nominee's Title: Director of Planning & Development

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

David Bowden will be retiring from the FCPA after more than 35 years of public service planning, designing and constructing recreational facilities for Fairfax County and the U.S. military. He has been responsible for providing more than \$750 million in parks and recreation facilities to Fairfax County residents and members of the military services stationed here and abroad. This work is his passion.

Over the past ten years, he managed \$240 million in voter-approved Park Bonds for Park Capital improvement and an additional \$50 million in park improvements through partnerships with developers, youth sports groups, and non-profits.

At FCPA, Bowden is most proud of his work with partners to develop nationally recognized park facilities. Those partners and facilities include:

- Joey Pizzano Memorial Fund -- fully-inclusive Chessie's Big Back Yard Family Recreation Area, including a unique inclusive spray park
- Analemma Society -- Observatory Park, with a state-of-the art innovative roll-top observatory
- Local youth sports organizations -- Synthetic turf fields to increase field capacity
- Washington Nationals Baseball Team and Major League Baseball -- Bryce Harper Baseball Field Complex to provide local youth with an exceptional facility

As Planning & Development Division Director, Bowden oversees 40 professional engineers and planners in land acquisition, planning, design, contracting and project management. He directs long-range planning, works with the Park Authority Board and represents FCPA in park planning and development at other Board and Commission meetings. He prepares the division's yearly operating budget and capital construction budget and monitors expenditures for efficient use of funds.

Throughout his career, Bowden has been commended for Outstanding Performance and meeting project schedules and budgets. He received the Army's Superior Civilian Service Award and two Commander's Awards for Civilian Service, as well as the Design-Build Institute of America's Special Recognition Award for Advancement of Design-Build in the Public Sector.

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Professional - Lifetime

Nominee: Jack Sutton

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: CEO

Nominee's Organization: Great Parks of Hamilton County, Ohio

Population: 813,822

CEO Jack Sutton has graciously served Great Parks of Hamilton County and our guests for 30 years. Jack began his career with Great Parks (formally Hamilton County Park District) as a Park Planner in 1989, moved to Planning Director in 1992, became Executive Director in 2002 and transitioned to CEO in 2017. Jack is Chair of the Natural Resources Assistance Council-District 2 (Ohio Public Works Commission) and serves on the Green Umbrella Regional Sustainability Alliance Board of Trustees. He retires in May 2019.

Jack has been pivotal in the success of two park levies, establishment of Great Parks' first philanthropic partner, a district-wide rebranding and the implementation of a Comprehensive Master Plan, which will lead Great Parks through 2028.

Jack has overseen the success of significant projects, including opening three parks, three visitor centers, golf course, boathouse, two dog parks, campgrounds and two harbor renovations, including a lake dredging project. He also led in the creation of four trails, including the county's first official mountain bike trail, Great Parks longest paved trail and the extension of the state-renowned Little Miami Scenic Trail. Overall, he has seen the park district grow 7,852 acres, to 17,666 acres, and has witnessed the addition of 54+ miles of trails.

Of his many milestones, one was fulfilling a former land donor's legacy of expanding a park to 1,500+ acres of protected greenspace. Another was planning and funding for the Little Miami Scenic Trail bridge project, scheduled for completion in 2021, which will link downtown Cincinnati with the Ohio to Erie Trail corridor.

His dedication to preserving natural resources will last generations with the return of the endangered running buffalo clover, population growth of the river otter and wild turkeys, increased sightings of bald eagles and continued protection of the endangered lark sparrow and cave salamander.

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Professional - Lifetime

Nominee: John Scholtz

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title: Director

Nominee's Organization: Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission, Michigan

Population: 282,250

John Scholtz, Ottawa County Parks' first and only Director since the Parks Commission was formed in 1987, is retiring in June. When John began his tenure with the county 32 years ago, there were nine parks, totaling 400 acres. Today there are 28 parks, 12 open spaces, nearly 7,000 acres of land, and over 135 miles of trail to enjoy.

John's vision and leadership have been crucial to the park system's success. In the mid-90's improvements and expansions were being made, but the addition of new properties was modest. At the same time, the county's population was rapidly increasing and land development was on the rise. The acquisition of the 164-acre Lake Michigan property, Rosy Mound Natural Area, created excitement; residents saw what the parks system could be with further investment. After it had become clear that funding was essential to support the county's growing population, the first 10-year parks millage was introduced and passed in 1996.

Millage funds were prudently used to leverage state and federal grants, allowing for key acquisitions, especially along the county's "greenway" areas: the Grand River, Pigeon River, Macatawa River, and Lake Michigan. Citizen satisfaction grew over the years with millage renewals passing in both 2006 and 2016, with increased support.

John was the only parks employee until 1988 when some seasonal staff and a second full-time staff member were hired. In the years that followed, building a strong operations team became a priority. Today, John oversees 22 permanent and 89 seasonal employees.

John's reputation of humility, sound judgement, and his love for his work is well-known. As is his ability to balance land preservation for conservation with developing spaces for recreation. His dedication to ensuring public access to the county's natural resources has allowed him to build strong relationships throughout his career.

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Professional - Lifetime

Nominee: Terry Robison, PhD

Nominee's Title: Director of Natural Resources

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

Retiring in April, Terry has guided a division of elite scientific staff in the management of natural areas that comprise 80% of Cleveland Metroparks 23,000+ acres to ensure conservation of these natural resources. Cleveland Metroparks experiences 18M+ visitors per year, putting enormous pressure on these resources. With 30 years of experience in science and a Ph.D. in Forestry, Terry relied on defensible scientific information to guide management decisions in order to strike compromise between conservation and recreation.

He and his staff researched and monitored the pressures of stormwater, wildlife, invasive species, pests, and public use on the park system and developed management strategies to deal with urban environmental pressures such as prescribed fire, wildlife tracking, plant community assessments, and stream and wetland restoration. Under his leadership, staff have secured over \$4.5M in grants to restore natural areas and contribute to comprehensive research projects.

Sharing his skills with the broader conservation community, Terry has contributed to projects with the National Park Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, US EPA, USDA, GLRI, Ohio EPA, Kent State University, University of Georgia, Ohio State University, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University, John Carroll University, Baldwin Wallace University, Hiram College, University of Akron, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and Holden Arboretum. He also served as adjunct faculty in the Department of Biological, Geological, and Environmental Sciences at Cleveland State University and as a member of the Natural Resources Assistance Council for Cuyahoga County.

Leaving a long-term legacy, Terry provided leadership for development of Cleveland Metroparks innovative and comprehensive natural resources program to ensure its integration into Park District functions such as strategic planning and land acquisition. He imparted his staff with vision, direction, advice and support and assisted them in developing their careers, skills and knowledge of conservation processes and techniques.

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Removing Barriers Initiative

Nominee: Adapted Aquatics Program

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Fairfax County Park Authority, Virginia

Population: 1.2 million

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Adapted Aquatics Program meets the diverse needs of county residents by providing swimming and water safety programs designed for individuals with disabilities. With nine indoor pools located throughout the county, 24 specially trained instructors, and over 125 volunteers, the program serves more than 1,500 customers every year. The adapted aquatics program offers something for everyone including adapted learn to swim classes, shallow and deep water exercise classes, paddling and boating safety classes, a Paralympic swim team, and four Special Olympics swim teams.

FCPA's Adapted Aquatics Program strives to eliminate all physical barriers to access by providing customers with aquatic wheelchairs, floating walkers, and a variety of adapted aquatics equipment at each pool. Additionally, all nine pools have ramps for zero depth entry into the water and private accessible showers and changing room facilities. Furthermore, the Adapted Aquatics Program removes barriers by recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers who provide one on one support in the water during adapted aquatics classes. This enables customers in the program to receive the individualized instruction they need while offering respite for family and caretakers.

To provide equitable access to the Adapted Aquatics Program, FCPA offers scholarships for customers with disabilities who are income eligible or receive Medicaid benefits due to a disability. This unique financial aid program ensures that program fees are never a barrier and in 2018 FCPA provided over \$20,000 in scholarships to adapted aquatics participants. The program serves individuals with disabilities ages three through senior adult and continues to expand to meet the growing demand. Since 2016 the number of customers served has increased by 19% while maintaining over 85% customer satisfaction ratings. With thousands of customers served, the Adapted Aquatics Program empowers individuals of all ages and abilities to enjoy the water safely.

Report link: http://www.ebmcdn.net/fairfax/fairfax-cable-viewer.php?w=768&h=432&viewnode=parksplus_adaptive_aquatics_Feb_16_V2

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Removing Barriers Initiative

Nominee: Barrier Free Playground At Secor Metropark

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Metroparks set out to develop a new play area at Secor Metropark to provide physical and sensory activity to children and adults of all physical abilities. Metroparks followed the Seven Principles of Universal Design which focus on the usage of individual play elements as well as the overall playground environmental design. By following these design parameters, the site qualifies as a national demonstration site for inclusive play.

Goals:

- Engage children with multisensory play elements that support the development of their minds as well as their bodies.
- Engage the entire family by allowing disabled parents to participate in their children's play experience.
- Create a unique inclusive barrier-free play area experience not found anywhere else in our region

All three goals were successfully achieved upon completion and installation of the playground.

Children with disabilities make up approximately 18-23% of Ohio's population. In Lucas County roughly 21,000 children have disabilities with only 1 fully accessible playground in the area. The next closest is over an hour away. The playground at Secor Metropark incorporates play elements specifically chosen to increase both accessibility and inclusion. The traditional transfer decks have been replaced with ramps and platforms have been added at the slides. Multiple textures, colors, and sound elements have been incorporated to engage all children regardless of their challenges.

Once the playground was installed, the community was invited to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony. Immediately, the project achieved its goal of engaging children and adults in a barrier free inclusive environment. Feedback indicated that communication to the public about the benefits of the project would be as important as the project itself. Staff enlisted some of our most engaged visitors and advocates to help with the completion and promotion of the project, thereby creating advocates for activating and sustaining the structure.

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Removing Barriers Initiative

Nominee: Cooperative Garden of Morris County

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Morris County Park Commission, New Jersey

Population: 500,000

The Morris County Park Commission (NJ), supported by the Morris Park Alliance, has created a unique partnership with social service agencies to provide fresh, healthy produce to clients. We are unaware of any similar program in the State. The Cooperative Garden of Morris County was created with funding from the NJ Healthy Communities - Shaping NJ program. The committee consists of staff from the Park Commission and staff from each of the partners. Partners include Homeless Solutions, Family Promise of Morris County (homeless assistance), CHAMP (supervised housing for psychiatric clients), and ECLC of New Jersey (students ages 5-21 with severe learning or language disabilities). There is no cost for the partners. Grants fund the budget of approximately \$6000, which includes a part time garden manager.

The garden includes 13 framed beds and 3 raised beds for wheelchair access. Each year clients prepare the garden, maintain it, and harvest the bounty. The produce is used in a group setting or taken home by the individual or family doing the work. Supervisors at partner agencies have used these opportunities to talk about cooking, nutrition, and science. Participants take these lessons with them as they move into their own homes or the facility where they live.

One of the young volunteers was very taken with the garden, "I love going to the garden because it makes me feel happy. If you go there you might just feel a little better yourself. The whole reason I like going to the garden is because I get to get out of the house and have fun with my family. You might see the groundhog and some grasshoppers. There are many different kinds of vegetables growing and they all have a nice sweet smell to them."

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Removing Barriers Initiative

Nominee: Lake Skinner Splash Pad Expansion & Inclusive Playground

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Riverside County Regional Park & Open Space District, California

Population: 2.2 M

The Lake Skinner Recreation Area Inclusive Playground and Splash Pad Enhancements provide accessibility and interactive elements for children of all ages. The new playground was developed with the intention of including park visitors of all abilities in each play element, providing opportunities for fun and engagement for all. The Riverside County Parks and Open-Space District recognizes the communities we serve are diverse. The facilities and playgrounds we offer should reflect the communities we serve. Our district believes active, independent play is critical for the development, health, well-being, and social opportunities of all children.

The Lake Skinner Recreation Area is a regional park and campground which serves a large area in southwestern part of the County. Based on the Accessible Playground Directory provided by "Let Kids Play!" accessibility consulting firm, our project provides substantial community benefit by addressing the need in the surrounding and regional communities for inclusive playgrounds. Currently, in the surrounding areas of Hemet, Menifee, Murrieta and Temecula, Margarita Community Park in Temecula is the only other listed Accessible Playground in the surrounding area. In addition to increasing value in the community by providing a much needed accessible recreational amenity, the District was able to improve water efficiency and usage at Lake Skinner Recreation Area.

The improvements were completed in Summer of 2018, just in time for vacationing families to enjoy these new amenities. To date, the playground and splash pad use has added value to the park for visitors with 99% rating the improvements as "excellent" or "very good." While the inclusive playground is a new addition, use is high with daily averages of 35 children and weekend high attendance at over 150 children per day. Splash pad use also increased by 13% over prior years.

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Removing Barriers Initiative

Nominee: Removing Barriers

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Columbus Parks and Recreation Department, Georgia

Population: 200,000

Throughout the years, the Columbus Parks and Recreation Therapeutic program has provided services for adults with disabilities and has been the transitional program for students after graduation. The therapeutic recreation section thrives on advancing the independence, social skills and community integration of individuals with disabilities with educational and recreational programs. We teach essential job skills through our volunteer service at the local humane society and being ambassadors for the local Special Olympic events for middle school students. Life skills are learned through educational classes such as healthy relationships, cooking class and our S.T.E.A.M. program. The participants engage in community integration by partnering with outside agencies, attending educational and recreational activities within the community.

Removing Barriers is a great example of the exciting activities that participants do that others may think they would not be capable of. Our program provides participants with once in a lifetime experiences such as whitewater rafting, rock climbing and facing their challenges or fears such as their social skills. Our participants have started to increase their independence in their home life by working part time jobs, taking public transportation and developing leadership skills.

The current number of participants within the program is 78 with a 60% increase in participation over the past year. The number increases when we add the monthly socials hosted by the therapeutic recreation program which is open to the entire disabled community. We also host an annual resource fair in partnership with a local nonprofit organization to increase awareness and opportunities for individuals with autism. The vision of the program has truly progressed throughout the years by not just providing the recreational activities but effecting the participants in a larger spectrum of their overall lives. The Columbus area and neighboring communities have been positively impacted by Columbus Parks and Recreation's Removing Barriers.

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Removing Barriers Initiative

Nominee: Silent Night at Heritage Hill

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Orange County Parks, California

Population: 3.2 million

Few public events cater specifically to meet the needs of cognitive and behavioral adaptations for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). According to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one in 59 children are identified with ASD across all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

With this in mind, OC Parks staff at Heritage Hill Historical Park in Orange County, Calif. created Silent Night, a free event for the underserved community. Silent Night is adapted from the park's popular annual holiday event, Candlelight Walk, for children with ASD.

For the inaugural event, OC Parks identified Newport-Mesa Unified School District's (NMUSD) Autism Team as a partner. The school district provided experienced volunteers to staff and support the various activities offered during the event. NMUSD also helped promote the event to the targeted community.

Families pre-registered for Silent Night during one of two timed entry windows on Dec. 14, 2018. The park offered luminaria-lit paths winding among the historic buildings, which were covered with holiday lighting displays. Marked paths led to ASD-suitable crafts, sing-along storytelling, Victorian carolers, refreshments, roasted chestnuts and even a chance to visit Santa Claus without the long lines. A Chill Zone was nestled in the park to create a stimulus-free space with fidget toys and weighted blankets so children could take breaks and enjoy the festive evening at their own pace.

Attendees were overwhelmingly supportive and thankful for the creation of a welcoming and safe public space for their entire family to enjoy the holidays together. Additionally, Silent Night provides a successful template for other park facilities to develop and implement programs and events for children with adaptive needs.

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Removing Barriers Initiative

Nominee: Veterans Memorial Vista at Rockwood Park

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

Veterans and Athletes United (VAU) is an all-volunteer non-profit operated by veterans. Their mission is to empower wounded, injured, and ill veterans of all generations to fully live their lives and honor fallen military service members. In 2018, VAU completed a Fallen Heroes Memorial, consisting of 7,000 dog tags, in the shape of a flag, with the names of those who have fallen in the War on Terror. This memorial travels to various locations, but it is headquartered in Chesterfield across the pond from Rockwood Park. To raise community awareness of the memorial, VAU partnered with Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation.

Rockwood Park is a centrally-located regional park. This 171-acre park attracts over 600,000 visitors a year. The park includes trails, shelters, dog park, playgrounds, athletic facilities and a nature center. The northernmost park boundary is defined by Gregory's Pond. Along the trails of Rockwood Park, one can look across this private pond and the Fallen Heroes Memorial is visible. The department applied for and was granted a buffer modification from Environmental Engineering to remove dead trees, underbrush and weeds from the area. Working with VAU, Parks and Recreation cleared a trail and scenic area to increase access to view the memorial. In addition, the department installed a plaque explaining the significance of the memorial. Project costs included \$7,000 for tree removal and the plaque. In-house labor was also used. The project was completed in fall 2018.

This special partnership to honor veterans is a first for Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation. Even though the memorial is located on private property, the community can now see the memorial and learn about the sacrifice made by the veterans. The newly-created vista offers a unique destination for hikers and park visitors.

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Trails & Corridors - Class I

Nominee: Clayton County Trail System

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Clayton County Parks & Recreation, Georgia

Population: 285,153

Remaining steadfast to the concept of connectivity, Clayton County Parks and Recreation Department was not confined by borders when it partnered with the City of Morrow to adjoin its trail system with that at Reynolds Nature Preserve. Creating over four miles of connective paths that allows traverse between Morrow's paved paths and Reynolds' natural trails will expand opportunity for the multi-use adventurer.

In 2015, Clayton County joined with the Path Foundation to build multi-modular pathways for non-motorized use; such as jogging and biking. The project was broken up into 4 phases. Phase 1 connected International Park to Reid Stephens Park. Phase 2 connected Reid Stephens Park to Lake Spivey Golf Club. Phase 3 connected International Park Crane Road entrance to Waverly Drive. Phase 4 connected Southern Perimeter International Park at Walt Stephens. The construction of walking trails gives Clayton County residents access to green spaces, which provide opportunities for citizens to engage in physical activity to improve their overall fitness and mental health. These green spaces and trails improve the economy through tourism and civic improvement and preserve and restore open space. The environmental benefits that greenspace provides include filtering pollutants from the air, shade that lowers temperatures, reduced soil erosion and natural resource conservation. The public has shown their love of the trails by participating in the Clayton Connects Trails Exercise Program and posting their progress on social media.

A generous donation of 2.8 acres of land from Joe Hamilton was dedicated to Clayton County in March 2018 and provides Phase 2 of the trail system.

The budget for the project was \$3,959,729.00 and was designed by the Path Foundation. Funding was secured through local SPLOST and development was fostered by Clayton County Government.

Link to updates and plans:

<http://www.claytonsplost.com/quality-of-life-and-leisure-projects/completed-projects/green-space/>

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Trails & Corridors - Class I

Nominee: Gold Star Memorial Trail: Connecting Communities and Remembering

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. - Gold Star Trail Committee, Wisconsin

Population: 87,833

The Gold Star Memorial Trail (GSMT) is a citizen initiated, public-private non-motorized trail project in Dodge County, Wisconsin to connect communities and serve as a memorial to our Wisconsin fallen service members (6 since 1991 were from communities to be connected by the GSMT). Our trail may be one of a kind with the Gold Star purpose. Additionally, the ability for such a small, rural area to fundraise over \$430,000 for the trail is truly incredible.

What began as a grass-roots initiative by a group of dedicated Mayville residents in 2013 to build a safe non-motorized travel option to connect their community to the then-under construction Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center, has grown to engage community members from all over the region to establish the GSMT as a vital non-motorized route connecting the largest cities in the County for residents, visitors and tourists. Citizens, business leaders, Gold Star Families and others formed a committee under the Friends of Dodge County Parks, Inc. and raised over \$430,000 of private funds and \$240,000 in grants for Phase 1, surpassing their \$650,000 goal.

Phase 1 opened fall 2018, connecting City of Mayville to Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area and its new world class Education and Visitor Center and trail system. Existing Horicon Marsh trails (Phase 5) connect to City of Horicon GSMT bike route (Phase 4) which will connect to City of Beaver Dam (Phases 2-3), traversing another 9 miles and intersecting with 34 mile Wild Goose State Trail. Each segment provides an important local connection, but together they comprise a significant regional trail system connecting the largest cities within Dodge County and improving access to year round healthy lifestyle opportunities, transportation and recreation - helping to turn the tragic deaths of our local heroes into something good at home.

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Trails & Corridors - Class I

Nominee: Maumee River Water Trail

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Metroparks Toledo, Ohio

Population: < 500,000

Located in Northwest Ohio, the Maumee River Water Trail flows for 108 miles and connects 39 access sites including five Metroparks, three state parks, and three wildlife areas, as well as 15 other publicly owned parks. As the largest tributary to the Great Lakes and with ongoing concerns about water quality, it is important to reconnect people to the Maumee River as a destination for recreation, tourism and source of local pride. The Maumee River Water Trail provides safe access to water recreation to over 400,000 people living in communities within 5 miles of the Maumee.

Water trails serve the community by packaging and promoting public access sites, printed materials, signage, and other resources to provide a consistent "one-stop shopping" experience for people interested in water recreation. While the Maumee River Water Trail isn't the first in the state of Ohio, it is the first to be backed by an extensive marketing campaign. This campaign offers the complete story of this significant natural resource, including historic and cultural context and information needed to interact, engage and experience it.

Typical marketing for a water trail includes public meetings, brochures, and standardized signage. What sets the Maumee apart from other State Water Trails is the interactive website which was created resourcefully using in-house software. The interactive website makes providing updates on the trail simple and fast, and also reflects one of the growing ways trails are being communicated to the public. The website utilizes screens to encourage viewers to spend more time outside. It is a user friendly service, designed to inspire increased usage of the water trail through active exploration and engagement. Visitors now have the tools and information they need to access the river, feel safe on the water, and to experience the physical and mental benefits of water recreation.

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Trails & Corridors - Class I

Nominee: Dutch Gap Conservation Area Relic River Boardwalk

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department, Virginia

Population: 344,000

The Relic River Boardwalk resides in an old oxbow of the James River, in an historically significant and unique part of the James. The facility includes an ADA-compliant eight-car parking lot, overlook, 148' of elevated and 400' of floating boardwalk with a canoe/kayak launch, both of which are fully handicapped-accessible for both wildlife observation and boating. The facility provides public access to part of the Dutch Gap Conservation Area previously inaccessible for historic/natural interpretation. The area is full of unique geographic features, wildlife and history. Interpretive signage enhances the experience for park visitors, linking cultural and natural history.

A National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways grant of \$125,000 and a contribution by the Henricus Foundation of \$62,500 was matched with County funding and use of park staff labor for construction for a total project of \$425,000. Using county staff saved money and provided high quality training and team building for parks employees. Design and construction were complicated efforts. Construction techniques were used to provide minimal disturbance to the natural habitat. The boardwalk was opened in February 2018, with the kayak launch added in June 2018.

The facility meets needs identified in the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan for non-motorized water craft and pedestrian accessibility. In addition, the Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey reports almost 30% of the population enjoys canoeing and kayaking in the Richmond region. The Relic River Boardwalk meets state and county needs for public access to water trails and natural areas for recreation. Traffic counters for the conservation area and adjacent historical site averages almost 15,000 vehicles monthly. Total traffic for 2018 was over 177,000.

The boardwalk is a major destination for wildlife enthusiasts, history buffs, fishermen and kayakers. The distinctive feature of the structure is that it floats in the marsh and provides access to an isolated wetlands habitat. In addition, the facility is ADA-compliant, providing a tremendous resource and opportunity for the population with physical impairments. The Relic River Boardwalk offers a unique experience in a natural environment unequalled in the region.

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Trails & Corridors - Class II

Nominee: Maricopa County Trails Management Manual

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, Arizona

Population: 4.17 million

Trails serve multiple purposes including exercising, walking, jogging, hiking, bicycling, bird-watching, equestrian, and off-highway vehicle use. They can also provide safe alternative transportation routes, as well as create connectivity from one facility or municipality to another. To ensure that the trails managed by the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department are planned, designed, constructed and maintained to a high quality standard, the department developed a Trails Management Manual in 2004. The purpose of the Trails Management Manual is to serve as a point of reference for best practices in trail planning, construction, and maintenance standards utilized throughout county's trail system. The manual outlines the standards and construction components which provide trail and track-related recreation opportunities, meet the department's management objectives, and are within the standards of applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Over time, the information in the manual had become dated, and was only accessible in hardcopy, so the department reimagined a revised on-line trails manual which includes detailed design, construction and maintenance standard illustrations, signage and marker guidelines, and addresses new and important objectives such as trail quality, connectivity, visitor experience, resource protection, agency cooperation, trail sustainability, and community engagement. The objectives identified in the manual are the building blocks and principle elements for creating a user-friendly efficient, effective, and sustainable trail management plan for both motorized and non-motorized trails. Once completed, the manual was put out for public review by agency peers and park visitors to determine whether or not there were areas in the manual that required clarification or expansion. Upon approval by the Maricopa County Parks Commission, the manual was made available online at:

www.maricopacountyparks.net/assets/1/6/2018_Trails_Management_Training_Manual_Update.pdf for outside agencies to use as a reference while developing their own trails management manuals. Sources referenced are provided in the manual.

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Trails & Corridors - Class II

Nominee: Maricopa Trail

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Dept., Arizona

Population: 4.17 million (2015)

In 2000, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors (Board) formed the Maricopa County Trails Commission and unveiled their desire to develop a regional trail system. The vision for the trail was to connect the majestic open spaces of Maricopa County's regional parks via a non-motorized trail system. By 2002, the Trails Commission had developed the trail concept for the Maricopa Trail System. Two years later, the Commission had fleshed out a 196-page comprehensive plan, which was adopted by the Board. The plan outlined the goals, segments, and design guidelines for the trail. The blueprint for the Maricopa Trail was designed to capitalize on existing right-of-ways, such as canals, parks, utility corridors and flood control projects while ensuring that the trail would be designed and constructed according to national trail guidelines. The intended users for the trail consists of runners, walkers, cyclists, inline skaters and equestrians - regardless of age and physical abilities.

To ensure that progress for Phase One of the Maricopa Trail was kept at the forefront on the department's Capital Improvement Project list, the Board provided a dedicated funding source for the trail system. Partnerships with agencies such as Tonto National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, state of Arizona, local cities, towns and county departments have helped to reduce construction costs and accelerated the completion time by utilizing existing trail segments, right-of-ways, utility corridors, and flood control projects. In addition, the department has partnered with the Maricopa Trail and Park Foundation to help maintain the trail by utilizing their extensive network of volunteers, and ability to secure grant funding for maintenance tools. To celebrate the completion of Phase One, the 315-mile loop that connects our regional parks to more than 21 cities/towns, three Tribal communities and three federal lands, the department hosted a celebration on November 17, 2018 attended by the public, partners, elected officials, and staff. The Maricopa Trail is proving to be an invaluable asset to connect the community with nature.

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Trails & Corridors - Class II

Nominee: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail

2019 Awardee

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Three Rivers Park District, Minnesota

Population: 825,552

How do you design and construct a nature-based 15-mile long regional trail through fully developed cities full of homes and businesses? This project exemplifies how it can be done!

Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail spans five cities, connecting them to Three Rivers' 160-mile regional trail network. The trail provides connections from neighborhoods to job centers, schools, libraries, retail/commercial nodes, churches, and parks. The trail also connects to the Mall of America, the Minneapolis Airport, Fort Snelling State Park and the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Development of a regional trail through five fully-developed cities requires a lot of collaboration! It was a 10-year process from the start of planning in 2008 to the grand opening in 2018, involving 14 different agencies, numerous boards and commissions, and of course - the public. Outreach included 10 open houses, Community Assessment Citizen Team meetings, and multiple public hearings. Creative use of existing parks, wetlands, school properties, city out-lots, public ROW, private easements, a railroad corridor and a regional sewer project were used to thread the trail through the cities. Screening of residential properties within 50 feet of the trail was also offered to mitigate perceived negative impacts of the trail.

Although the trail traverses an urban environment, use of 1.7 miles of boardwalks made it possible to create a nature-based setting through wetlands and in floodplain corridors along its namesake creek. Potential trail gaps were remedied with three trail bridges over highways, and a trail tunnel under an arterial street. The trail is open year-round to bicyclists, walkers, runners and dog-walkers and is expected to attract over 400,000 visitors each year.

Development of Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail had a total cost of \$25 million, with funding from Three Rivers, regional development funds, state funds and federal transportation funds.

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Trails & Corridors - Class II

Nominee: Pine Hills Trail Phase 1

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Orange County Parks and Recreation Division, Florida

Population: 1,348,975

Orange County Parks and Recreation opened the first part of Pine Hills Trail - Phase 1 (1.75-mile trail with 0.75-mile spur) on October 18, 2017, at Barnett Park in Orlando.

The third most needed trail on Orange County's Trails Master Plan, the Trail's phase 1 segment design and construction cost was about \$6.7 million of federal funding, administered by the Florida Department of Transportation. Orange County Public Works oversaw construction.

This phase of the Pine hills Trail project uses an existing Duke Energy electrical power transmission utility corridor, which is bordered by the backyards of Pine Hills residences. The project consisted of construction a 10-foot to 12-foot wide asphalt trail with one-foot wide concrete ribbon curb on either side. In time this trail will connect to the Shingle Creek Trail (the first one-mile phase opened on January 30, 2019) and will cover a critical gap in Florida's Coast-to-Coast Trail, a 250-mile trail across the state, linking communities from the Gulf Coast to the east coast. This project is an investment in eco-tourism - and creates trails that celebrate each unique community it passes through.

Orange County worked in partnership with Duke Energy (formerly Progress Energy) since 2002 on the conveyance of the property to the County; preliminary discussions with Duke Energy to move forward with the project re-started in 2013 and acquisition was completed in June 2015.

The County's master plan calls for two more phases of Pine Hills Trail: the second will go north from Silver Star Road to Clarcona-Ocoee Road, and the third from Clarcona-Ocoee Road north to the Seminole-Wekiva Trail. When completed, the Pine Hills Trail will be about eight miles in length.

From the Trail's opening in October 2017 to September 2018 (fiscal year), the park saw 585,632 visitors - an increase of more than five thousand visitors per month.

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Trails & Corridors - Class II

Nominee: Valley Parkway Connector

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: Cleveland Metroparks, Ohio

Population: 1,249,000

On October 22, 2018, Cleveland Metroparks opened the Valley Parkway Connector Trail. This six-mile "missing link" in the all-purpose trail network between Brecksville and Mill Stream Run Reservations was laid out more than 100 years ago as part of park founder William Stinchcomb's vision of an inter-connected Emerald Necklace. With this gap finally filled, bicyclists and pedestrians now have access to 33 consecutive miles of connected paved off-road shared-use trails before reaching the Towpath Trail, part of the statewide Ohio to Erie Trail, and on to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Completion of this missing link had been a priority for Cleveland Metroparks since planning began in 2009 with an involved public process supported by the region's metropolitan planning organization, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). The resultant Valley Parkway Trail Alignment Study, provided the plan to develop the trail, and the process used to create it solidified the partnership of Cleveland Metroparks and the cities of Brecksville, Broadview Heights, and North Royalton.

In order to structure funding from multiple sources, the trail was split into two phases. Patience and persistence were needed to assemble funding. Construction on the \$4.75 million project began in 2016 with support from grants from the Clean Ohio Trails Fund through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) improvement grant through NOACA, and local funding from the cities of Brecksville, Broadview Heights, and North Royalton and Cleveland Metroparks capital funds.

This strong partnership also allowed for additional outreach to the community, resulting in positive solutions to trail-building concerns. As part of this process, Cleveland Metroparks staff and members of the Ohio Horseman's Council also re-established an equestrian trail along the north side of Valley Parkway corridor prior to construction of the new all-purpose trail.

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Trails & Corridors - Class II

Nominee: Wiseburn Walking Path

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization: County of Los Angeles Dept of Parks & Recreation, California

Population: 10 million

Once weed invested and blighted, the area located east of the 405 freeway was transformed into a beautiful walking path and green space providing numerous passive recreation opportunities for families residing in the area.

With numerous community meetings dating back to 2012, the Wiseburn Walking Path Project (Project) commenced in December 2015 and the path was officially opened to the public on September 9th, 2019. The project aimed to revitalize not just the environment on the long, 3,200 feet linear patch of land, but also the community: while the inclusion of over 3,000 drought tolerant plants, over 100 trees and solar powered lighting reduce energy consumption and support the use of renewable energy by lowering the carbon footprint, the Project accomplished much more.

With a project cost of over \$2.7 million , the Department of Parks and Recreation worked with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps to construct the decomposed granite walking path along with installing outdoor exercise equipment, solar powered pedestrian lights, community gathering nodes, bollards, an information kiosk, and a new wrought iron fence separating the path from the freeway. Providing further amenities and accessibility to play, three unique children's play areas, comprised of colorful concrete pavers, were creatively fabricated and installed by the Department's South Agency crafts section.

This project benefited from a close partnership between the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, and various other County departments and agencies. The leadership and support provided by the Los Angeles County Second Supervisorial District, and residents of the Wiseburn Community were integral to the project's success. The Project was nationally recognized and was selected as 2018 Project of the Year by the Corps Network.

Watch the video: <https://bit.ly/2VxjRaV>

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