

**Department of Parks
Director's Report
Thursday, September 8, 2011**

Highlights:

- **Hurricane Irene & Earthquake Impacts on Parks**
 - **Park Police Make National Headlines with Arrest at Cabin John**
 - **Enterprise End of Summer Wrap Up – Revenues Up \$60K**
 - **Parks Staff Get Athletic Fields Ready for Fall Play**
 - **Lake Frank Trail Connector Project Underway**
 - **Wheaton Playground Expected by September 30**
 - **REOI for Park Activity Buildings on the Streets**
 - **Artificial Turf Update**
 - **Parkside Renovations and Reduction in Office Rental Space**
 - **ParkStat and SmartParks – Project Underway**
 - **Parks Museum Manager Goes to Canada to Visit Uncle Tom's Cabin Site**
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Events

- **SEPTEMBER 8 & 11—Maryland Senior Olympics Softball Tournament**, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Olney manor Recreational Park, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm.
- **SEPTEMBER 10—All Cameroonian Cultural and Development Foundation Soccer Tournament and Community Day** in partnership with the Montgomery County African and Caribbean Communities, Office of Community Partnerships, Fairland Regional Park.
- **SEPTEMBER 11—Childhood Brain Tumor Foundation Superheroes 5K and Kids Fun Run**, Meadowbrook Local Park.
- **SEPTEMBER 11—Freedom 5K, Damascus 5K Race**, Damascus Recreational Park, 6:00 am – 2:00 pm.
- **SEPTEMBER 11—Montgomery County Road Runners Club Parks Half Marathon**, Aspen Hill Local Park, Parklawn Local Park, Winding Creek Local Park, Randolph Hills Local Park, Veirs Mill Local Park, Ken Gar Local Parks 6:00 am – 1:00 pm.
- **SEPTEMBER 16—Woodmoor-Pinecrest Citizens Association, Woodmoor Outdoor Movie Night**, Pinecrest Local Park, 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm.
- **SEPTEMBER 17—Grand Opening of the Tai Chi Court at Cabin John Regional Park**, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.
- **NOW – SEPTEMBER 18—Wings of Fancy Life Butterfly & Caterpillar Exhibit**, Brookside Gardens, South Conservatory, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm daily, www.BrooksideGardens.org.
- **SEPTEMBER 18—MOCO MOJO Kids Triathlon**, Martin Luther King Recreational Park, 6:00 am – 12:00 noon.
- **SEPTEMBER 24—Annual Burtonsville Day**, Burtonsville Local Park, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.
- **SEPTEMBER 25—Maryland Senior Olympics Softball Tournament**, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Olney Manor Recreational Park, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm.
- **SEPTEMBER 30—Davis Productions, Inc., Nightmare Forest**, South Germantown Recreational Park, nightly.

- OCTOBER 1—**Harvest Festival**, Agricultural History Farm Park, 11:00 am – 6:00 pm, www.AgHistoryFarm.org.
- OCTOBER 11—**FAM Tour** in partnership with Prince George’s County, Brookside Gardens, Rockwood Manor, Oxon Hill Manor and Newton White Mansion, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm, www.ParkEventCenters.com.

Highlights

Hurricane Irene impacted Montgomery Parks in several ways, and the 5.8 earthquake a few days preceding it combined to create challenging response environment. A summary for both events:

- Our Enterprise division experienced a revenue loss of \$24,050 due to Hurricane Irene. The loss amount represents rental and class revenue and projected revenue on admissions. No reduction for reduced costs for staff time. The breakdown follows:

▪ Cabin John Ice	\$5,312.24
▪ Wheaton Ice	\$1676.12
▪ Pauline Betz Addie Tennis	\$252.00
▪ Wheaton Tennis	\$292
▪ Event Centers	N/A
▪ Black Hill Boats	\$3,627.00
▪ Cabin John Train	\$2,255.00
▪ Wheaton Train	\$4,492.00
▪ Little Bennett Campground	\$1,197.00
▪ Olney Skate Park	\$197.00
▪ South Germantown Driving Range	\$2,000.00
▪ South Germantown Splash Park	\$2,750.00
- Park Police prepared for the hurricane by monitoring creek levels and parks during the storm, closing roads and facilities, and inspecting parks after. Many employees changed their schedules to handle this emergency.
- A new Parks Department Incident Command System was used and worked very well. Jim Humerick, Northern Parks Operations chief, was named incident commander.
- Park staff deployed to the field and conducted immediate inspections of the parks, structures, amenities, and buildings for damage following the earthquake and, a few days later, another inspection for damages following Hurricane Irene. In the Northern parks, with the exception of considerable damage to the Magruder Branch Hiker-Biker Trail, no other major structural damage was found, but broken limbs and debris resulting from the hurricane were cleared in many areas. In the Southern parks, all bridges and structures were inspected after the earthquake, with several bridges identified for further inspections, and several park structures (fences, pavilions, kiosks, play structures, etc.) were damaged by falling trees during Hurricane Irene. Crews are still busy with storm cleanup, including chipping downed trees, clearing hanging branches, blowing trails, etc.
- We are calculating costs through SmartParks and created a special labor code for the storm for potential FEMA reimbursement. Special thanks due to IT staff, all the Park Police who covered the EMC, the tree crews, inspectors, and Mike Davillier and other park managers.

In other news:

- Park Police Officer Brian Paulsen made national news when he arrested a man at Cabin John Regional Park intent on creating a disturbance at the National Mall with a large amount of fireworks in his modified vehicle. This was the top media story until it was trumped by the earthquake felt in the DC area.
- Our Enterprise facilities ended summer with some high notes:
 - Registration for summer classes at the ice rinks increased by close to 100 participants due to an August mini-class session and the ice rinks hosted 9 different summer camps that were attended by 1,000 participants;
 - Summer revenues at the pro shops were above projections;
 - New summer sessions of indoor tennis classes were offered with over 150 participants and there were 3 different summer tennis camps and numerous tennis clinics with almost 200 participants;
 - The event centers hosted numerous events during the summer, with 9 events over the Labor Day weekend;
 - Woodlawn tent revenues have paid for the tent in 3 months;
 - 825 participants used a coupon we placed *Washington Parent* magazine at the boat rentals, trains and Splashpark;
 - Summer clinics at South Germantown Driving Range had 300 participants and summer camps 62 participants;
 - There are 99 Olney Manor Skate Park seasonal pass holders and summer camps at Olney Manor had almost 80 participants;
 - Overall revenues for the Enterprise facilities for Memorial Day to Labor Day were \$60,000 over last year during the same time period.
- Park athletic fields closed during August 15 - 31. During this closure period, parks staff did considerable maintenance on the baseball and softball fields for the fall league play and repainted lines for the soccer fields. The fields reopened for play September 1. In the Southern parks, a great deal of the athletic field preparation was obliterated by the hurricane and need to be redone.
- The Lake Frank Trail Connector is under construction and will connect the Rock Creek Hiker-Biker Trail to the Lakeside Trail along the east side of Lake Frank. This project is being built by State Highway Administration as part of the ICC project. Our Park Development division began facility planning for the North Branch Hiker-Biker Trail, which will continue the Lakeside Trail north to connect to the ICC bikeway. It will also connect to a future developer-built project in the Preserve at Rock Creek development. This is a very important trail link and will also remove unused parking lots at Lake Frank.
- Wheaton Adventure Playground construction is expected to be completed by September 30.

- Parks removed 30 tons of contaminated soil before completing the demolition and site reclamation project at the 2831 Spencerville Road property in Burtonsville (Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area).
- A Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) for the use of vacant and closed park activity buildings was issued on August 19, 2011. The deadline to submit proposals is September 23, 2011. The underutilized buildings were closed at the end of Fiscal Year 2010 as a cost-savings measure.
- The transition of the park house maintenance program from a contractual maintenance provider to in-house Facilities Management Division staff is underway and already we have received positive feedback from several tenants. All in all, there is plenty of work to go around, and FM staff is doing a terrific job tending to everyone's needs. The Property Management Office is now headed by acting Park Property Manager Michelle Grace, and thanks and congratulations to Carrye Massey who transferred to the Enterprise Division.
- Parkside Headquarters renovations are fully underway, and it is quite a major construction project – despite a few setbacks, we are moving quickly to accommodate more of our down-sized workforce in that location, and we moved our Park Planning & Stewardship staff out of the rental space on Spring Street on August 31.
- M-NCPPC staff leading the new ParkStat system in Prince Georges Parks and Recreation and have joined forces with our SmartParks staff, and there are dozens of working meetings underway involving over a hundred representatives from both departments. Under the leadership of Mike Snyder and John Schlee, we are collaborating to launch a combined statistical management process for both organizations – for us, that means transitioning from SmartParks to a more robust management system for operations and administration.
- The County Council's T&E and ED committees will be taking up the issue of synthetic or artificial turf, pros and cons, on September 26. Deputy Director Mike Riley, who serves on a working group, will represent M-NCPPC. The Planning Board is on record in support of synturf in selected locations, and the department has installed two to replace heavily used athletic fields. Discovery SoccerPlex also has three synturf fields, and some county high schools have such fields as well.
- Outreach naturalists Leslie Sturges and Brady Hartley are working with Julie Super and Leslie McDermott to promote the Nature Everywhere programs to area schools. We will be hosting the State of Maryland "No Child Left Inside" quarterly meeting next month.
- At Black Hill Regional Park's Monarch Fiesta Day this past Saturday, September 3, and despite early morning thunderstorms, hundreds of visitors came to learn about Monarch butterflies and their amazing annual migratory flight to Mexico. There were many first-time visitors to the event and to the park, and it was quite successful.
- Parks staff is coordinating with County Executive staff to implement the CE's decision to rename the Montgomery Aquatic Center at Wall Park for Eunice and Sargent Shriver.

- Rock Creek Regional Park staff Kevin Van Scoyk and I took Maryland State Parks Director Nita Settina on a tour of “Go Ape” and park staff also gave a tour of the facility to representatives of Indianapolis Parks.
- The Miracle League Field Dedication Ceremony at South Germantown Recreational Park on August 1 was a warm success, with the manager and players from the Washington Nationals, the donor Lerner family, County Executive Leggett, Chair Carrier, other officials, and wonderful kids and families in attendance. The event was televised on local news.
- Staff from both Parks and Planning attended a follow-up meeting with DEP director Bob Hoyt and staff, and worked through an agenda on several topics of mutual interest.
- In spite of budget cuts, we continue to support environmental training and awareness for all staff: for example, four Southern region park managers recently completed Storm Water Management and Maintenance Course at Montgomery College.
- Our museum manager had a wonderful and informative trip to Canada, courtesy of the Uncle Tom's Cabin Canadian Heritage Site in Ontario, where she participated in that site's Emancipation Day event. More collaboration is planned between our department's Josiah Henson site and its "Canadian cousin."

Mary R. Bradford

Director

M-NCPPC - Montgomery County, Department of Parks

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