



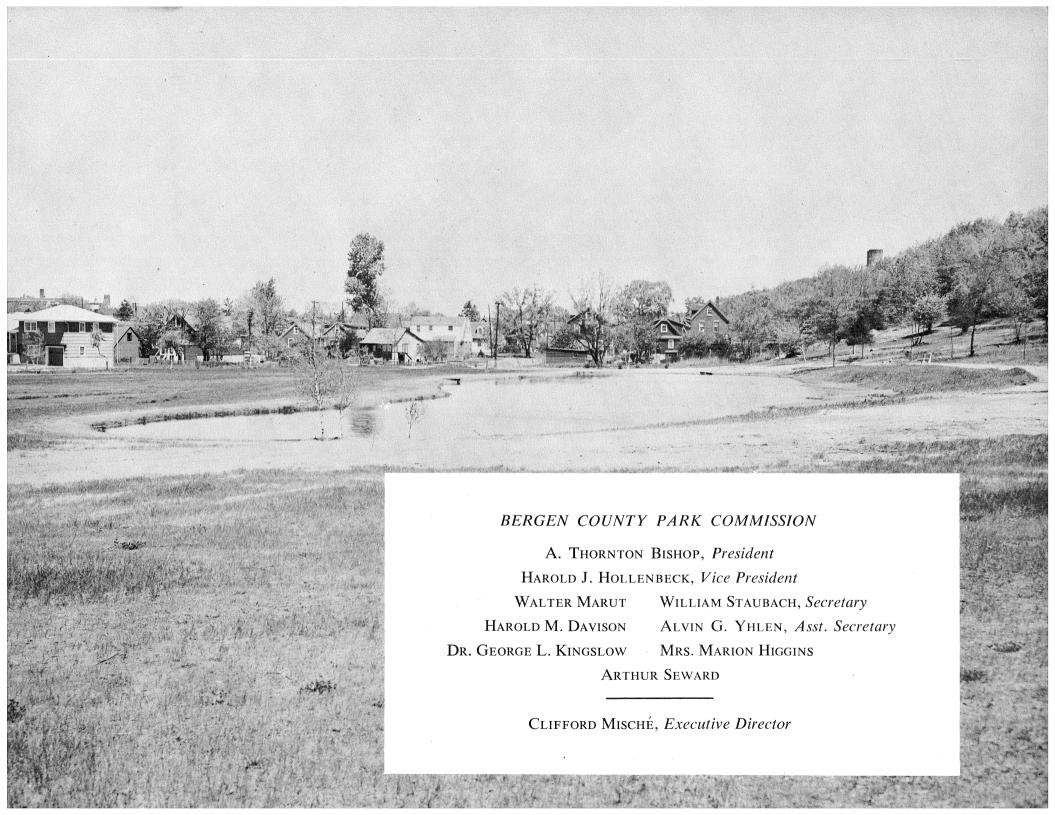
BERGEN COUNTY'S PARK PROGRAM

Tenth Annual Report

BERGEN COUNTY

PARK COMMISSION

1956



Board of Chosen Freeholders Administrative Building Hackensack, New Jersey

The Bergen County Park Commission is pleased to submit herewith its Annual Report covering progress made during 1956. Park sites are gradually becoming recreation areas available for the public's pleasure.

In spite of the Commission's desire to develop areas more rapidly for recreational programs, it still is mindful of the necessity to acquire the lands needed to meet the ultimate demand that will be made by our increasing population for park facilities.

The Commission feels assured your honorable body shares with itself this important objective.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Thornton Bishop President

The Year in Review

Brownies at Wild Duck Pond in Ridgewood



During 1956 park construction made new areas in the County system available to the public. Work was begun in Overbrook Park in Westwood, a park in Wallington, as yet unnamed, and a section of Van Saun Park in Paramus where a riding school was established and a paddock and practice field were built. Progress was made in rounding out the parcels needed for the golf course in Rockleigh, and basic drainage and land clearance work was done by the Commission's field forces. Modest improvements were made on each of 15 other areas opened to public use.

Engineering studies toward the completion of the master plan for the Overpeck Creek project were advanced by the Commission's consultant. Progress was retarded because of the proposed alignment of the Bergen-Passaic Expressway which was still undetermined at the year's end. This highway, traversing the upper portion of the proposed park area, has caused new studies to be made so that the bisected areas might be designed for their most practical use. Plans for the relocation of Fort Lee Road west of the waterway were approved on State and County levels, and some additional parcels of land in the area were acquired.

A building on the south side of Fort Lee Road that had been purchased by the Commission was, with the general approval of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, reconditioned for the use of the Bergen Community Museum. Landscaping of the grounds, and the building of a parking area has provided quarters for this important activity until more permanent facilities can be provided.

Through an act of the State Legislature the personnel of the Park Commission was increased during the year from five to nine members.

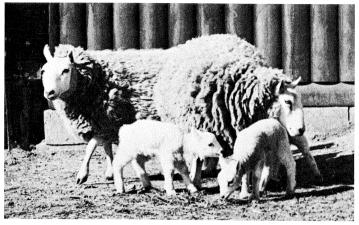
Though all of the additional four were not appointed during the year, the Commission gained the services of Harold J. Hollenbeck, mayor of East Rutherford, Mrs. William F. Higgins of Hillsdale, Alvin G. Yhlen of Saddle Brook and Dr. George L. Kingslow of Hackensack, prior to December 31, 1956.

Early in 1957 Commissioner Ira H. Davey resigned and Arthur Seward of Tenafly was appointed to fill out the unexpired term. Mayor Walter Marut of Wallington was also appointed which completed the Commission.

Further progress in the land acquisition program included approximately 46 acres in the Saddle River system, and some small parcels in Westwood, and Teaneck. Studies were made of available acreage in the northern areas of the County for possible acquisition. A park site was suggested by the Commission to the Board of Chosen Freeholders embodying parcels in Hillsdale, Park Ridge and Woodcliff Lake, and upon approval by that body negotiations were begun to acquire upwards to 150 acres for future development.

In a projection of a concept of what the future Bergen County Park System should be to meet the needs of the fastest developing area in the New York metropolitan region, it is evident that additional land will be required. This land should be obtained while it is still available and while its cost is at the lowest level it can be expected to be.

When Bergen County's Park system is completed it will be expected to mean almost all things to all people. Land values will have increased because of the proximity of county parks. With a variety of features ranging from golf courses to trailside museums, facilities that will guide the lives of future generations, your park system will serve to underwrite the cultural, physical, and recreational aspects of the increased population.



A family of sheep at Van Saun Park



A section of the paddock at Van Saun Park

Progress Along the Saddle River

The 800-acre Saddle River project progressed in several ways during the year. More parcels of land were acquired to further the assembly necessary for effective operation of the flood control program. In this way the work of the Commission is coordinated into other public improvements.

Some of the recent land acquisitions have permitted the County Engineer to contract for the relocation of the Saddle River from the crossing of the Garden State Parkway southward to Railroad Avenue in Rochelle Park.

Drainage lines were laid to carry storm water from Saddle Brook streets across the park area to the river. Seeding, tree and shrub planting, and grading has turned the lake area north of the Parkway crossing into a useable greensward. It is the intention of the Commission to

Distant view of the picnic grove at Saddle River Park

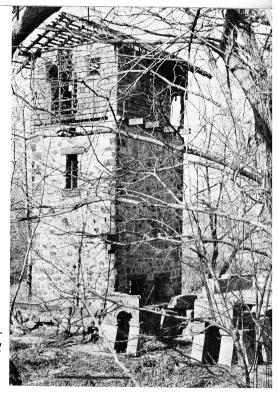


develop further the use of this area by the building of paths around the lake, and the construction of a parking field.

The Demerest Memorial Foundation, in cooperation with Clyde A. Bogert, transferred the Old Red Mill property at Arcola to the Commission for reconstruction and preservation as a historic site. Negotiations for the gift were conducted with Mr. Hiram B. D. Blauvelt whose suggestions were valuable in the Commission's studies for the renovation of the mill.

Mr. W. B. Ihnen, son of the architect who originally designed the mill sent plans and photographs from his California office which enable the Commission's staff to better study the problem. The relocation of the river at this point, and part of the improvement plans is scheduled to be done in 1957.





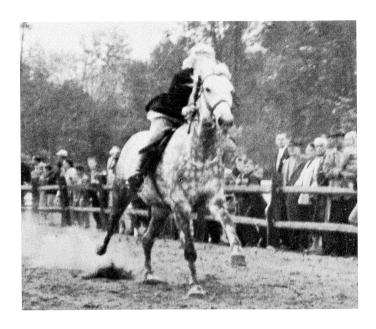
The Arcola Mill—to be restored



The new ball field at Saddle Brook

Winter scene, Saddle Brook Lake

VAN SAUN PARK



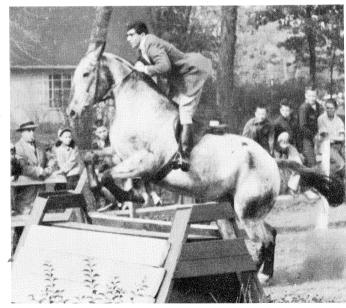
Action at the stable

Perhaps the most popular single feature established by the Commission has been the Paddock area of Van Saun Park. Here, the riding school directed by Sergeant Cannon, retired trainer of the New York Police Department mounted corps, was installed in a reconstructed stable with a practice ground having rings and jumps for equestrian exercises. Throughout daylight hours the activity in the practice yard brings many visitors, and each week end draws hundreds to the area.

Late in the fall the Commission bought six ewes, all expecting, for which quarters were built, and early in 1957 the flock was increased by 10 lambs. Live stock in the area doubled public interest and gave some suggestion of the reception that can be expected as the Commission continues its plans for the development of the park.

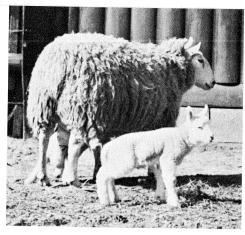
Studies are on the drawing board, and some models have been made, toward the construction of a Children's Zoo. However, much work must be done in the area before a larger portion of the park can be made available to the public. A road leading from the stable and paddock, and crossing the brook, is to be extended through the park to Continental Avenue.

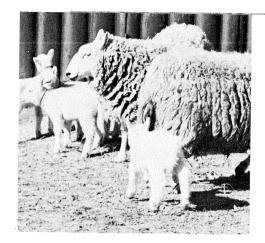


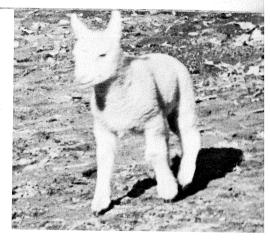




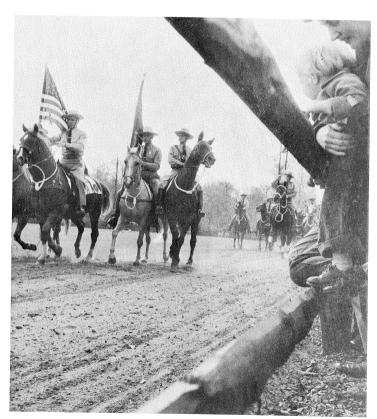




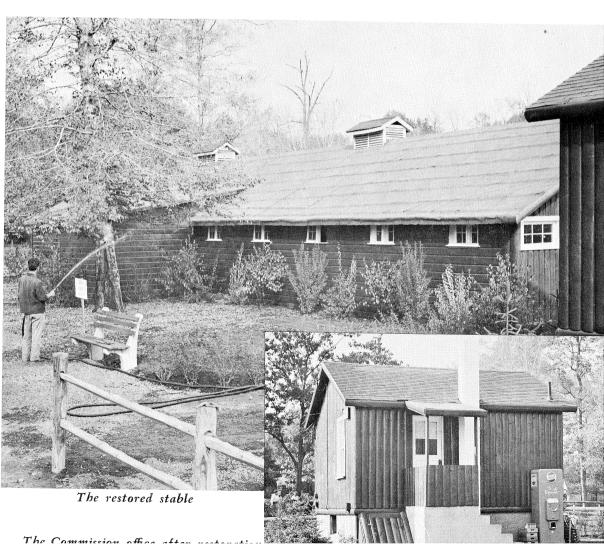


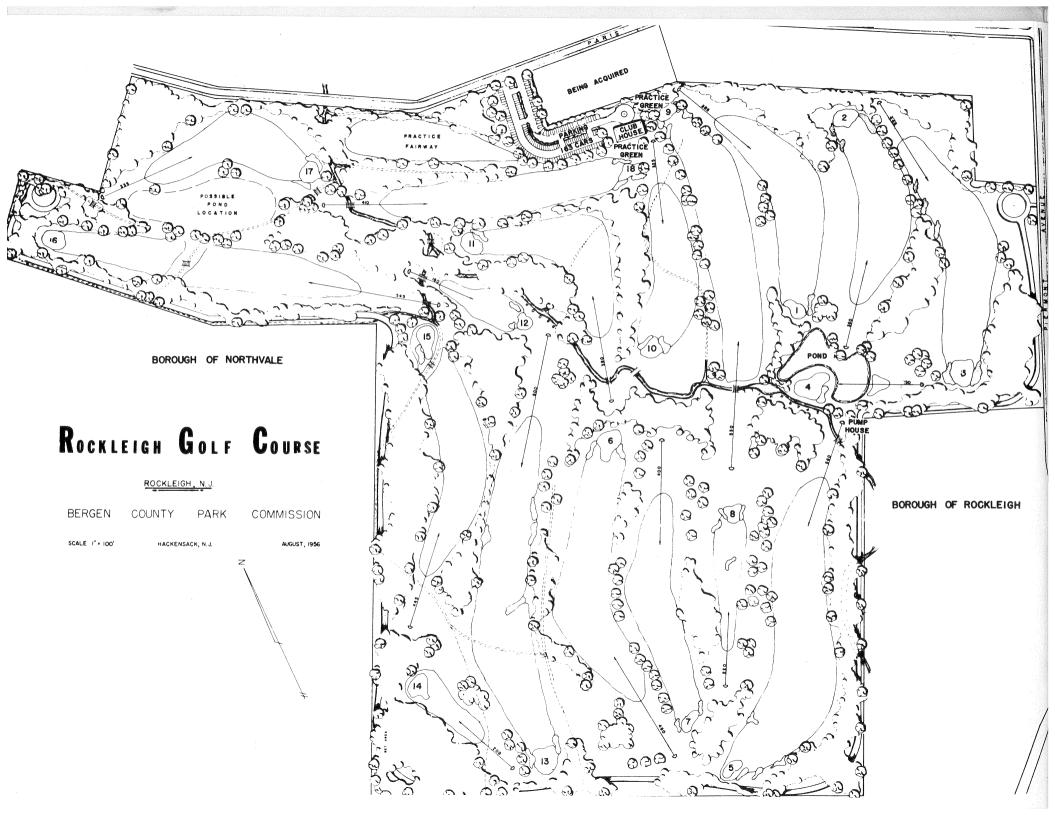


Sheep at Van Saun Park



Mounted Deputy Sheriffs of Bergen County at the opening of the park





THE ROCKLEIGH

During the past several years the Commission has been assembling land in the northeasterly section of the County, primarily in the Boroug of Rockleigh, as a site for a County golf course. The land is exceptional fitted for such a purpose, having a pleasantly rolling terrain with small stream traversing the area somewhat diagonally. The easter section was an impassable swamp.

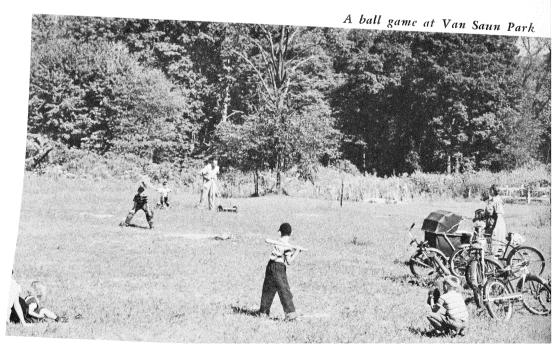
The acquisition of a 13-acre parcel, the gift of Senator Walt Jones, rounded out the land necessary for laying out of the cours With 173 acres assembled, the Board of Chosen Freeholders made fun available for proceeding with the work, and the Commission retain Alfred H. Tull, a prominent golf course architect of New York, design the course.

The entrance to the course is on Paris Avenue where the clubhout will be located. The course is laid out so that the first and the ter tees are located near the clubhouse, and the ninth and the 18th ho finish here. This will be convenient for those who care to play eith of the nine holes for a shortened game.

Construction drawings were prepared and bids were received. Analyzation of them indicated that the contractors were apprehens of the amount of clearing and drainage work to be done and, allowing an ample margin for safety, submitted bids exceeding considerably architect's estimates. The solution lay in the assignment of the clearing and drainage work to the Commission's field forces, who were meaniliar with the problems involved. Irrigation and finished construction work was again advertised for bids, resulting in much lower proposal

The Commission's field forces, working through the winter with heavy earth-moving equipment, have prepared the site for the final stages in the contracted construction work.







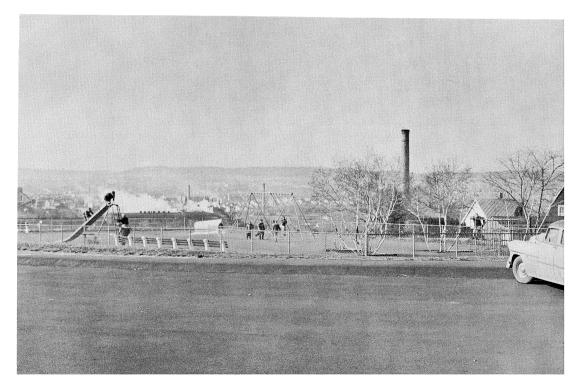
Action on the Diamond



Action on the Court



Passaic River Park South



The Overlook at Garfield



PROGRESS along the Overpeck

By far, the largest project to be undertaken by the Commission is the elimination of water pollution, reclamation of land and development of a park in the vast Overpeck Creek basin.

Planning of the project is an enormous problem that requires the coordination of the engineering considerations of municipal drainage, industrial effluent, flood control and sanitary land fill. The study of these problems by the Commission's staff and engineering consultants has extended over a period of more than five years.

Independent of these considerations, major engineering problems developed concerning the Tenpenny Creek, a tributary passing from the east side of the tidal dam to the Hackensack River down river from the dam, and on the alignment of the Bergen Passaic Expressway. It is incumbent on the Commission to protect the County's park holdings to the best of its ability. It is not the intention of the Commission to oppose the construction of needed highways, and every attempt is made to cooperate with road planners, and coordinate plans so that park holdings are not hopelessly destroyed.

The pressure of the times for highways has imposed great danger to park undeveloped land areas and therefore has apparently made them available at small cost to road planners. The value of such park lands in a long-range usage to the public welfare must not be underestimated. Parks stabilize values that may be created by roads and must not be sacrificed or the values roads create will be lost. Human values are the more permanent values and parks are needed to sustain these.

The Commission's consultants have made a series of studies of park road patterns, area usage and facilities suggested for ultimate development of the Overpeck Park. It became apparent early in these studies that Fort Lee Road would have to be relocated and that the internal road system of the park would have to be designed as an independent park road constructed for the use of vehicular, especially passenger car, traffic. Relief of traffic congestion on the neighboring Teaneck Road and Grand Avenue would have to be met by marginal roads at the westerly and easterly boundaries of the park. The size and shape of the lake is being determined so that excavated materials will balance the need for fill in the park, leaving ample provision for areas to be reclaimed by the sanitary land fill operation.

However, the immediate objectives of the Park Commission are the reclamation of the land area by means of dredging operations, the establishing of a circulatory road system, the settled bed of which is needed for all further development operations, and the protection of the newly-formed land by a grass cover to prevent erosion. This in itself constitutes a worthy and time-consuming program. Decisions on future installations in the area can await a future date at which time neighboring communities can join more effectively with the Park Commission in a determination of the final details of the park design.

A. Thornton Bishop, William S. Davis, Freeholder John K. Pollitt and Mrs. Selena Johnson at the Opening of the Bergen Community Museum on April 27



An Estimate of Bergen County's Park Needs

Actual Populations
Bergen County

1930 . 364,977

1940 409,646

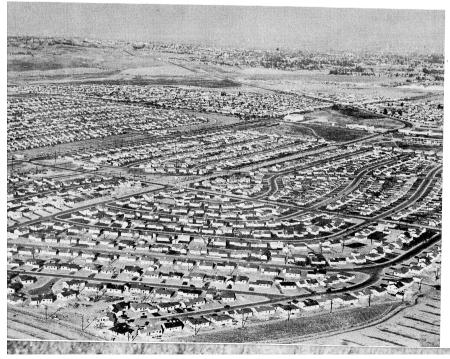
1950 : 539,139

1956 696,228

1960. 780,000 (estimated)

1970... 889,000

Hundreds of homes, but no place to play



The foundation of a Park Commission is land. In Bergen County the pressure of increasing population is creating higher and higher land prices. The Commission feels that the land needed to round out the Park System should be acquired now, even at the cost of further park construction in the near future. The Commission can always catch up on development, but it may not always be able to acquire land.

The size, shape and the location of park properties determine what the system will be, what it will cost and what service it will render. The size and the topography of the terrain usually determine what can be done; the location frequently determines what should be done.

Large city park systems sometimes can be compared to county park systems in that both have a variety of recreation needs, local playgrounds, sectional parks and a large park or rustic area that serves the entire community and satisfies the urge for out-door life.

The County system consists of many parks serving small regions in a more or less daily way with possibly a wildlife reservation to supply this specific need. These individual parks of various sizes and shapes throughout the County are intended to serve the population in a way not possible by either the municipalities or by the vast State parks.

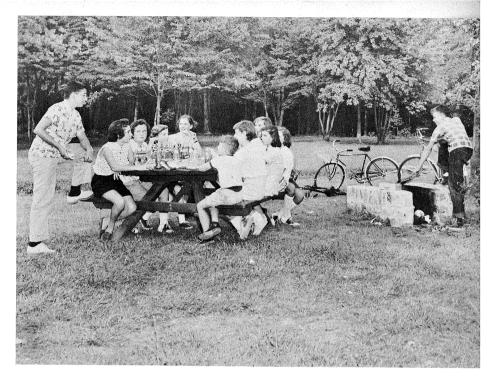
An accepted formula by park authorities is that 10 percent of the land of a political division should be reserved for park and recreational purposes. About half of the land needed should be held at the municipal level in local parks, school playgrounds and the like. The State and County should hold the other half.

Using this formula, 15,000 acres of land in Bergen County should be reserved for park use. Half of this, or 7,500 acres should be municipal and 7,500 acres State and County. Statistics indicate that Bergen municipalities hold about 3,000 acres, while the County and State hold slightly less than 5,000 acres. The shortage of recreation lands is approximately 4,500 acres at municipal level and 2,500 acres at County

and State level. There is no evidence that the State is contemplating any extension of its park holdings in Bergen County, so the burden of acquiring 2,500 acres falls upon the County.

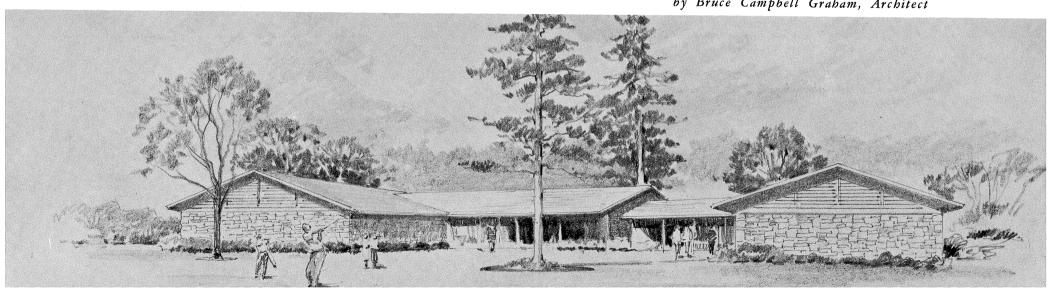
Means of supplementing the financial structure of the Commission are needed to meet the urgency of acquiring land for future parks at this time. The County is presently authorized to issue \$3,000,000 in bonds for park purposes. Of this amount \$1,245,000 is already issued or authorized. Debt service on this amount of bonds fully authorized totals \$150,000 a year. This debt service must be paid out of the Commission's budgetary allotment that approximates \$600,000 annually at the present time. Should the entire \$3,000,000 bond authorization be actually issued the debt service would be about \$300,000, leaving a balance insufficient for even the maintenance of the presently usable park areas.

To maintain a balanced growth in the development of Bergen County funds are needed for land acquisition immediately, and a way should be found to provide funds for sustaining the growing system where the Commission's budgetary funds are not to be burdened with the debt service.



A Picnic in Wild Duck Pond Park

Rockleigh Golf Course Clubhouse as planned by Bruce Campbell Graham, Architect



Progress in Land Acquisition

LAND Prop	ACQUISI ERTIES COM	TION STATE	MENT UIRED					
Bond & Budget Acconts Close December 31, 1956								
Close December 31, 1930	SUB-TOTALS Acres Cost		TOTALS					
			Acres Cost					
PRIVATE PROPERTIES COMMITTED FOR OR ACQUIRED								
Reported close of Dec. 31,								
1955Title closing adjustments	1,787.49 -13.60	,,						
		-4,475.00	1,773.89	\$1,104,083.30				
COMMITTED OR ACQUIRED IN 1956								
Overpeck Creek Area Saddle River Area	0.33	2,500.00						
Van Saun Area	46.68 0.12	149,250.00 601.00						
Northwest Bergen Area	47.30	9,500.00						
Northeast Bergen Area	17.50	2,500.00						
Donated	13.08	-0-						
Pascack Valley Area	0.34	1,500.00	107.85	163,351.00				
MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES ACQUIRED								
Reported close of Dec. 31.								
	1,279.29	-0-						
Adjustments made in 1956	2.00							
1930		-0-						
Municipal property	1,275.40							
donated 1956	+0.02		1 275 42	-0-				
RIPARIAN RIGHTS COMMITTED								
Reported close Dec. 31,		ino committee	,					
1955, 45,311.19 linear feet		-0-	_0	45,311.19				
Grand Total of All Propertie		-	2 157 16	#3,311.19				
		OF PROPERTY C						
OR A	ACQUIRED FO	OR PARK PURPOS	ES					
Close December 31, 1956	CYIT	. Tomara						
Areas	Acres	3-TOTALS		OTALS				
OVERPECK CREEK AREA	Acres	Cost	Acres	Cost				
Purchased or committed								
for	113.70	\$169,154.00						
Municipal properties	113.70	\$109,134.00						
donated	957.06	-0-						
Riparian rights		45,311.19	1,070.76	\$ 214,465.19				
PASSAIC RIVER AREA		_		,				
Purchased or committed								
for	50.46	121,321.00						
Carried Forward	***************************************	***************************************	1,070.76	\$ 214,465.19				

BROUGHT FORWARD 1,070.76 \$ 214,465.19 Municipal properties 80.16 -0- 130.62 121,321.00 SADDLE RIVER AREA Purchased or committed for 477.56 487,510.00 Municipal properties 38.20 -0- Private properties 487,510.00 487,510.00 SOUTHWEST BERGEN AREA Purchased or committed for 12 2,200.00 Municipal properties 400.00 -0- 90.12 2,200.00 Municipal properties 400.00 -0- 139.34 194,562.73 Private properties 125 -0- 139.34 194,562.73 NORTHEAST BERGEN AREA Purchased or committed for 156.14 110,806.75 Private properties 13.08 -0- 169.22 110,806.75 PASCACK BROOK AREA Purchased or committed for 2.26 6,904.87 Municipal properties 400.00 -0- 112.26 6,904.87 Municipal properties 400.00 -0- 112.26 6,904.87 Municipal properties 400.00 -0- 112.26 6,904.87 Municipal properties 500.00 -0- 500.00 ACKENSACK RIVER AREA 400.00 -0- 500.00 ACKENSACK RIVER AREA 400.00 -0- 500.00 ACKENSACK RIVER AREA 500.00 500.00 500.00 ACKENSACK RIVER AREA 500.00 500.00 500.00 ACKENSACK RIVER AREA 500.00 50					
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NORTHWEST BERGEN AREA Purchased or committed for	Municipal properties	2.20	0,904.87		
NORTHWEST BERGEN AREA Purchased or committed for	donated	110.00		112.26	6,904.87
for 927.49 174,964.95 HACKENSACK RIVER AREA Purchased or committed for .08 10.00 Grand Total 3,157.16 \$1,312,745.49 SUMMARY OF LAND ACQUISITION *Private properties purchased or committed for 1,865.90 \$1,267,434.30 Private properties donated 15.84 -0- Municipal properties donated 1,275.42 -0- **Riparian rights committed for (Overpeck Creek) -0- 45,311.19 3,157.16 \$1,312,745.49					
HACKENSACK RIVER AREA Purchased or committed for	for for			027.40	1710610
				927.49	174,964.93
	Purchased or committed				
SUMMARY OF LAND ACQUISITION *Private properties purchased or committed for					10.00
*Private properties purchased or committed for 1,865.90 Private properties donated 15.84 Municipal properties donated 1,275.42 $-0-$ **Riparian rights committed for (Overpeck Creek) $-0-$ 45,311.19 $-0-$ 45,311.745.49	G	rand Total		3,157.16	\$1,312,745.49
#Riparian rights committed for (Overpeck Creek)	SUMMA	RY OF LA	ND ACQUIS	TION	
#Riparian rights committed for (Overpeck Creek)	*Private properties purchase	ed or commi	tted for	1,865.90	\$1,267,434,30
**Riparian rights committed for (Overpeck Creek)	Private properties donated			15 9 /	-0-
<u>3,157.16</u> <u>\$1,312,745.49</u>	**Riparian rights committed	-0-			
		- (5.31pt		3,157.16	
*The above total of private properties purphesed and account 16	*The above total of		=		

^{*}The above total of private properties purchased and committed for comprising 1,865.90 acres at a cost of \$1,267,434.30 averages \$679.261 per acre.

**Riparian rights represent 45,311.19 linear feet at \$1.00 per foot.

Auditor's Report

BUDGET FUNDS

DUDGET 1	UNDS			
Surplus, January 1, 1956			12,99	2.59
ADD: SURPLUS ADJUSTMENT				5.00
Adjusted Surplus, January 1, 1956		\$	13,40	7.59
BUDGET APPROPRIATION—1956			450,00	
		\$	463,40	
EXPENDITURES:				
Salaries and Wages	\$ 184,436.21			
Office Operating Expenses	18,598.18			
Engineering, Drafting, Design	6,943.38			
Land Acquisition Expenses	5,896.18			
Legal Fees	13,753.40			
Field Expenses:	13,733.10			
New Equipment	10,389.55			
Maintenance and Repair of	10,507.55			
Equipment and Supplies	24,155.02			
Park Development Materials	39,284.82			
Capital Improvements:	27,201.02			
Engineering and Design	50,000.00			•
Salaries and Wages	25,000.00			
Construction	50,296.26			
	American de la companya del companya del companya de la companya d	428,753.40		
Surplus, December 31, 1956		\$	34,65	4.19
DOM	D ISSUES			
COUNTY PARK BONDS AUTHORIZED, INCLUD LESS:	ing Down Paymen	Γ		\$1,631,000.00
Disbursed for Land Acquisition and Impro Committed for Land Acquisition	ovement\$	1,013 262	3,692.10 2,563.19	
			,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	1,276,255.29
D				***************************************
Balance Available, December 31, 1956				\$ 354,744.71
All vouchers were examined and				

in payment of these vouchers were compared with both the voucher and the entry in the financial records. These were found to be correct.

Cash in bank was reconciled with the book figure.

Respectfully submitted,

Certified Public Accountant (N. J. & N. Y.)

