

1982
Annual Report
Of the
BERGEN COUNTY PARK COMMISSION
Paramus, New Jersey

BERGEN COUNTY PARK COMMISSION, 1982

Paramus, New Jersey

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William L. Mann, Assistant Executive Director

*James H. Lockwood, Assistant County Counsel

H. George Avery, Assistant County Counsel

*Resigned July 26

BERGEN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS, 1982

Hackensack, New Jersey

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Eugene Di Paola, County Administrator

Deputy Administrators:

Charles A. Lagos

Richard L. Nelson

Stephen R. Spector, County Counsel

*Died May 11

**Resigned June 9

IT TAKES A LOT OF SPRUCING UP
TO COUNTERACT THE RAVAGES OF TIME

Because many of our Bergen County park system facilities are getting along in years and are showing the wear and tear, an ever-increasing portion of the Park Commission's spending must go to repair, renovation, and replacement.

The effort to preserve and restore and maintain established facilities is much less exciting than the Commission's early extensive land acquisition and development of new facilities. Exciting or not, the effort is of necessity a prime Park Commission consideration.

Though park system expansion and development have slowed, the public still has new features to look forward to. These include an Overpeck Park recreation area in the park's Ridgefield Park section, a new aviary and other improvements at the zoo in Van Saun Park, and a 1 3/4-mile extension of Saddle River County Park's North Trail for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Park Commission furthered these projects in 1982.

Operating a large park system is incredibly challenging and complex. To guide the operation, Commission members must be alert, informed, and concerned. Personnel, hard put to keep up with the demands and pressures, should be complimented for a job well done.

All of us take pride in our parks and do our best to maintain the highest standards possible with the time and money available.

WILLIAM F. SMITH
Bergen County Park Commission President

BARRIER-FREE

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTED

Construction making public park facilities barrier free, preparation for park development in Ridgefield Park, and the start of construction of an animal-holding complex in the zoo at Van Saun Park were among major Bergen County Park Commission considerations in 1982.

Extensive changes were made at the 68 existing public rest-rooms (34 for men and 34 for women) to provide wheel chair access, and construction of new rest-rooms was started. Rest-rooms being built are at the Van Saun Park zoo and the north end of Riverside Park's South Area. A comfort station for Overpeck Park's Leonia South Area was in the design stage at the end of the year.

Three ramps with handrails were built from the beach into the lower swimming lake at Darlington Park, making the lake accessible to handicapped bathers. Special drinking fountains accessible to persons in wheel chairs were installed at comfort stations where there had been fountains and at the Darlington Park snack shop building. Barrier-free showers were added at shower rooms.

By the end of the year approximately 98 per cent of the barrier-free construction and installation had been completed. Park Commission bond-issue funds were used for the work, and the Commission was later reimbursed with a \$350,000 grant from the State Green Acres Program and \$314,000 from Bergen County Community Development funds.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK IN RIDGEFIELD PARK

Engineering field work was done for general site development in the proposed Ridgefield Park recreation area at Overpeck Park. A field survey was made, and cross sections were obtained to determine site conditions following the filling and grading which began in 1980. This information is necessary for the consulting engineer's preparation of sitework and construction specifications.

Material excavated from the Saddle River in Rochelle Park by the Bergen County Mosquito Extermination Commission was stockpiled by the Park Commission and carted by the Park Commission to the Ridgefield Park recreation site and other County areas needing fill. The projected entrance road to the Ridgefield Park area was relocated at the request of the Village of Ridgefield Park.

ZOO CONSTRUCTION IS STARTED

Construction of the zoo animal-holding complex began in 1982. The complex comprises a building for winter housing of tender species and for the ongoing breeding program and an adjacent building for storage.

A VARIETY OF PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Park Commission projects in various stages of development in 1982 included: the start of considerable renovation at Darlington Park, installation of 25 new pole guns for snow-making and a new machine for grooming snow on the Campgaw Ski Center slopes, continuation of work on land acquisition (including an exchange of 7.63 acres with the Village of Ridgewood) for a 1 3/4-mile extension of Saddle River Park's North Trail for bicyclists and pedestrians and submission of plans for the extension and its bridge to State and federal agencies concerned with water policy, and addition of a wooden deck to the Darlington Course golf house.

Also completion of a new soccer field in Riverside Park South and preparation of plans for renovation of Overpeck Park's Leonia North soccer field, obtaining of some 300 feet of portable chain-link fencing for football-season use at Breslin Field in Riverside Park, putting Breslin Field in usable order following 1981 installation of lights for night play, revision of heating and ventilating systems and replacement of windows for conservation and efficiency at the Overpeck Course golf house, resurfacing of tennis courts at Pascack Brook and Wood Dale Parks, a truck maintenance and storage building at Van Saun Park in the design stage, sanitary sewers for the Wildlife Center and Darlington Park in the design stage, and painting and renovating of the Overpeck Riding Center stables.

Also renovation of the pedestrian bridge spanning Ho-Ho-Kus Brook in Glen Rock and preparation of plans for a new aviary at the zoo in Van Saun--with later revision of the plans to cut costs. Fencing at the zoo area was extended to increase protection along the railroad.

DARLINGTON PARK UPGRADED

A new diving platform and diving boards and a new retaining wall for the lower lake were among Darlington Park projects under way in 1982. Also work began on repair of the dam and construction of two new handball courts to replace the deteriorated old courts. Approximately a mile of 6-foot chain-link fencing was installed along the park's eastern and northern boundary lines.

REVENUE OFFSETS 34% OF OPERATING OUTLAY

Park Commission revenue in 1982 from user fees and other sources totaled \$2,175,816, which was turned over to the County Treasurer. Funds returned to County coffers amounted to 34.6 per cent of the Park Commission's \$6,253,050 1982 operating expenditures. Capital expenditures totaled \$2,556,197.

The 27-hole Rockleigh Golf Course led the 1982 revenue list with \$583,319; more than 90,000 rounds of golf were played there. Darlington Golf Course had the second highest revenue total, \$347,895. Other totals were: Overpeck Golf Course, \$323,040; Darlington Park, \$290,532; Orchard Hills Golf Course, \$151,822; Overpeck Riding Center, \$127,482; Campgaw Ski Center, \$117,773; registration and park-use fees, \$85,713; railroad at Van Saun Park, \$75,297; miscellaneous, \$60,661; and pony rides at Van Saun Park, \$12,282.

SHORT-TERM INTEREST AUGMENTS REVENUE

A short-term investment program, inaugurated in October, yielded \$3,272.77 in fourth-quarter interest. As revenue reaches Park Commission headquarters, it is invested and the interest earned is added to the monthly total turned over to the County Treasurer, who in turn invests the revenue for the County.

THE COMPUTER SHARES THE WORK LOAD

By the end of 1982, the Park Commission's first full year of automation, all revenues and expenditures were being computerized by the Commission's finance department and the permit department had begun computerization. The finance department was able to close out the books for each month in approximately three hours, as compared to five to seven days before automation. The Park Commission had reached the point where it was becoming impossible to keep pace with the great quantities of paper work involved in the multimillion-dollar park system operation without automation.

BUYING ON A LARGE SCALE

Shopping lists for 26 park recreation areas would stagger a householder's imagination. In 1982 the Commission spent \$74,106 on fertilizer, fungicides, and top dressing for greens, fairways, and tees at the four County golf courses--apart from what was spent on like supplies needed for other landscaping work throughout the park system. Just for paper towels and toilet paper the Park Commission spent \$7,000 in 1982.

Capital-fund purchases in 1982 included trucks and heavy equipment costing a total of \$248,453.

WILDERNESS PARK ENLARGED

In 1982 Ramapo Valley County Reservation gained 112.98 acres with acquisition of the 57.44-acre Henion property and the 55.54-acre Baldwin property in Mahwah. The property was purchased with the assistance of the State Green Acres Program. New acquisitions bring to 1,407.06 the number of acres in this wilderness park, extending the hiking possibilities and insuring preservation of the additional natural terrain for public enjoyment.

The 7.63-acre property acquired in the land exchange with the Village of Ridgewood borders the Saddle River along the southwest side of Grove Street. It is needed for the projected bicycle-pedestrian path extension to the park's Wild Duck Pond Area in Ridgewood.

ON-THE-JOB ACCIDENTS DECREASE

Workmen's Compensation payments were significantly reduced through efforts of the Employees' Accident Review Committee. Supervisory personnel reviewed and analyzed employee accidents as part of an accident-prevention effort linked to the County's self-insurance program. In each case the committee recommended action to prevent recurrence of the accident.

DARLINGTON GOLF COURSE OPEN MONDAYS

Darlington Golf Course, which had been closed Mondays, opened for nine holes of play on Mondays. (The other nine holes were closed Mondays for maintenance work, as at Overpeck Golf Course.)

JOSEPH A. CARUCCI JR. AREA IS DEDICATED

What had been Riverside Park's South Area was renamed the Joseph A. Carucci Jr. Area in honor of the man who had been Freeholder liaison to the Park Commission for 5½ years and a member of the Park Commission for the preceding 5 years. Freeholder Carucci died May 11. Dedication of the renamed area and of a bronze plaque honoring Freeholder Carucci took place September 25. Participants in the ceremony included County officials and Lyndhurst dignitaries. Freeholder Carucci served with the Lyndhurst Township Council for 17 years, as Mayor for 7 years.

BICYCLE RACKS INSTALLED

Park Commission workers installed some 130 bicycle racks--most in County parks and a few at railroad stations--after the cement pads had been set in place. (A Federal Highway Agency grant was awarded for the bicycle-rack project, which was initiated and directed by the Bergen County Planning Board.)

WILDLIFE CENTER AND ZOO PRESENT PROGRAMS

In 1982, 1,320 nature education programs were offered at the Wildlife Center and two county reservations, and 500 animal programs were presented by the staff of the Van Saun Park zoo.

Of the 1,320 programs at the Wildlife Center and reservations, 137 were scheduled for the public. The rest were specially scheduled for school classes and organizations. Attendance at the 1,320 programs totaled 37,184. Attendance at the Van Saun Park zoo's programs totaled 24,032.

The Wildlife Center's staff of naturalists scheduled the 1,320 programs and presented most of them, also conducted a variety of workshop classes, led nature walks, demonstrated the making of maple syrup, and set up natural science exhibits.

Most of the Van Saun Park zoo's programs were presented at schools and organization meeting places and were accompanied by a small cast of cooperative animals.

CIVIL WAR BATTLES ENACTED

The public had an opportunity to see realistic battles staged by Civil War buffs at Belmont Hill Park. Participants wore battle dress and used period weapons or replicas of Civil War firearms. Union and Confederate encampments were set up. Kevin Titus of Garfield organized the project, which was arranged in cooperation with the Bergen County Park Commission.

Park Commission crews constructed, installed, and repaired facilities throughout the park system.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS VARY

Commission crews' construction projects included a stockroom shed at Wood Dale Park, a commissary room in the zoo winter quarters and a new peccary pen at the zoo, the wooden deck at Darlington Golf Course, a steel and wooden bridge and a new deer pen at the Wildlife Center, a retaining wall along the brook at Van Saun Park and a parking lot for the maintenance department at Van Saun Park, a steel cab on a tractor, and a metal animal cage. A light fixture and an iron fireplace rail were fabricated for the Wildlife Center. Cabinets, shelves, and signs were constructed and placed.

Ornamental plantings throughout the park system included a new rock garden in the center bed of the zoo.

A MULTITUDE OF INSTALLATIONS

Among facilities installed by Park Commission personnel were playground equipment, electric service, a turbine, a gasoline pump, hydrants, heaters, air conditioners, fans, a sound system, a zoo watering system, the pole guns for snow-making, floor tiles, laminated wall covering, macadam on a bridge and on a service road, kitchen equipment, a concrete sidewalk and apron, timers, lights, alarm systems, camping shelters, a chandelier, ceramic tiling, sprinkler lines, irrigation lines, railroad ties, curbing, a water main, a retaining wall, a pony corral fence, a plaque on a stone base, drainage systems, doors, and flagpole lines.

Sitework included filling and grading as needed. Groundwork was done for a service road at Ramapo Valley Reservation.

HARD HIT BY VANDALS AND THIEVES

Vandals and thieves played havoc in the parks--damaging a crane, stealing and destroying ornamental plants and sod, damaging and destroying fencing and signs, breaking plumbing and doors and light fixtures and lockers, wrecking and submerging and stealing picnic tables, damaging emergency phones and gates and irrigation equipment, throwing tee markers into the woods, taking hole-marker flags, smashing locks and barricades, damaging the ski hut and playground equipment and pavilion posts, prying off shingles, ripping off leader pipe, and chopping down trees.

Repairs accounted for much of the field employees' work. In addition to repairs of vandalized facilities mentioned above, there were repairs to pumps, alarm systems, roads, locks, sprinkler lines, irrigation lines, a water main, roofs, railroad signals, hydrants, pipes, windows and screens, a chimney, shelters, bridges, paths, chair lifts, valves, stairs, and vehicles. Painting was never ending.