Parks We Are Proud Of

Superintendent's Annual Report 2012

Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board
Our Mission

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shall permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board exists to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.
Greetings from the Superintendent

Wow, we have a great park system.

As I review all we’ve done in 2012 and see the sampling of pictures and descriptions in this report, I am impressed again by the range of resources we manage, programs we offer, and people we serve. I’m grateful, too – for the many people who created this wonderful system and the opportunity to do our part to preserve and improve it.

Of course, that’s a challenge. Budgets are tight and will remain that way. We have no choice but to do more and better with less. That requires change and constant improvement, which is never easy. The park board has 136 fewer full-time employees than ten years ago. 2012 was the first year since the 1980s that the Park Board didn’t see any increase in revenues from property taxes. Yet, our costs continue to increase — and expectations are justifiably high for our parks to remain a central component of the quality of life in Minneapolis and Minnesota.

To preserve the vast park system we have, to deliver programs that are relevant to the lives of residents and visitors, and to continue to provide for the future needs of our city, requires a great deal of internal planning, adjusting, changing, and, frankly, hard work. We hope most of that toil and turmoil is never visible to you and others who love Minneapolis parks. If we can deliver services seamlessly, without interruption or hiccup, we will take pride in a job well done.

I am extremely proud of the people I work with every day, who have tackled the tasks of aligning our internal structure and policies with the expressed needs and desires of all the diverse park users we serve. We have collectively examined organizational performance, leadership structure, work climate, community outreach, community engagement, occupational safety and customer service. All with the goal of doing our job better. We have identified areas of improvement and have taken forceful steps to ensure that we do improve. But we have never lost sight of the ultimate goal of providing you and your neighbors with parks and programs that you will be proud of and gladly claim as one of the big reasons that you choose to live or work in Minneapolis.

This report, like last year’s, is structured around the 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan, which lays out clearly the vision, values and direction that were carefully chosen and articulated to guide our efforts.

Jayne Miller
Goal: Sound management techniques provide healthy, diverse and sustainable natural resources

Invasion Emergency. In June, the MPRB adopted emergency measures to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species to Minneapolis lakes. Inspections were required of all boats entering Lake Calhoun, Lake Harriet and Lake Nokomis at public boat launches. The public boat launch at Wirth Lake was closed. On another front, the MPRB stopped riverboat cruises departing Boom Island Park from passing through the St. Anthony Lock to help impede the spread of Asian Carp above the St. Anthony Falls.

Fight On. In 2012, the MPRB spent nearly $3 million combating invasive plant species on land and water. The primary targets were Emerald Ash Borer, Dutch Elm Disease and Eurasian Milfoil. Thousands of volunteer hours were spent removing buckthorn, mustard garlic and purple loosestrife from park property.

Better Turf. All five 18-hole championship golf courses were aerated in September to promote healthy, deep-rooted grass.

Vegetation Restoration. Many sections of Theodore Wirth Regional Park were prepared for the restoration of native grasses and wildflowers in the aftermath of the 2011 tornado that ripped through the park. Park crews removed wood chips and brush, planted a cover crop of oats to prevent erosion, and applied herbicides to inhibit growth of invasive species. Seeding of the prepared areas will follow in early 2013 with appropriate lowland and upland plants.

Ash Removal. Ash trees continue to be removed from parks and boulevards due to Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). In August, foresters discovered an infestation at Fort Snelling Golf Course. Throughout the year, the MPRB continued proactive measures to identify and slow the spread of EAB, including removal of the infested trees, establishment of trap trees, continued surveying of ash trees, and removal of any ash trees that are damaged and defective. An event in September at Powderhorn Park, which has 160 ash trees, taught residents how to identify ash trees and spot signs of infestation.

Scuba Divers Hit the Lakes. The MPRB successfully tested a new method of harvesting Eurasian Milfoil from shallower water in Wirth Lake and Lake Nokomis where mechanical harvesters cannot operate: scuba divers harvested the invasive plant by hand.

Goal: Healthy boulevard trees connect all city residents to their park system

Northside Treecover. In continuing efforts to re-green parts of North Minneapolis devastated by a tornado in 2011, 3,100 new trees were planted in that part of the city. The effort was crowned by the planting of 1,000 trees during Arbor Week in May. Volunteers from Best Buy, Cargill, Xcel Energy and Target supported the effort. Camden Lions and Lions Club International contributed $15,500 and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation contributed $18,000 toward the total cost of $250,000 for new trees. Twenty-one types of trees were planted, most were 8-12 feet tall.

Elmer Says, Water Trees Weekly. With 6,000 new trees planted throughout the city in 2012 and continuing drought conditions, Elmer the Elm Tree was enlisted to remind residents to water trees on their property and on boulevards every week. Elmer helped spread the word that watering a tree once a week for five months costs only about $3.

Dutch Elm Update. Dutch Elm Disease continues to be an issue in our urban forest. However, only 900 diseased elms were removed in 2012, the fewest in many years.

Tree Maps. The MPRB website now includes a link to an interactive map of the Minneapolis Tree Canopy created as part of a study by the University of Minnesota. The map provides information on the tree canopy on public and private property. The MPRB contributed funding towards the study.
Goal: Residents and visitors enjoy and understand the natural environment

Top Flight. Theodore Wirth Regional Park and North Mississippi Regional Park hosted the Seventh Annual Urban Birding Festival. Park staff offered birding hikes, bird house building, bird art and birding excursions by canoe.

They Clean Up Real Nice. The annual Earth Day event in April provided volunteers the opportunity to help clean up their favorite parks. 1,500 volunteers collected more than 10,000 pounds of trash. A 5K Recycle Run and free Kids Run the next day provided runners an opportunity to help support future events and greening efforts.

Nature Quest. Environmental Operations initiated a popular family hiking and exploring program in February at Minnehaha Park called Winter Nature Quest. Following clues throughout the park, participants searched for hidden nature-based treasure. After the treasure was found, the intrepid questers enjoyed warm treats.

Get Out! Powderhorn Park hosted the 2nd Annual Get Outdoors Day in June. Free activities to promote outdoor exercise and adventure included a climbing wall, mountain biking, standup paddle boarding, geocaching, voyageur canoe paddling, scavenger hunts and boat safety training. Partners for the event were REI, DNR, US Forest Service, USACE, Wilderness Inquiry and Nordic Ski Foundation. KMOJ and KFAI provided promotional support.

Happy Trails. A $1 million grant was awarded to the MPRB in August by the Federal Highway Administration’s Transportation and Community and System Preservation program for the design and construction of a ¾-mile trail on the east bank of the Mississippi River above the falls. The trail will link Boom Island Park with the new Scherer Brothers site and Sheridan Memorial Park and continue upriver to the BNSF railroad bridge. The trail is expected to be completed in 2015.

Goal: People and the environment benefit from the expansion and protection of natural resources

Nokomis Gets Weir’d. A new lower-maintenance weir at the outlet of Lake Nokomis into Minnehaha Creek was installed in September. The weir prevents polluted creek water, which may contain zebra mussels and other aquatic invasives, from entering the lake, but allows water to be released from the lake if levels are too high. The project is a collaborative effort with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD).

Dredge Sighting. In another project with MCWD, the stormwater pond southwest of Lake Calhoun was dredged in January as part of routine maintenance. Dredging removes the sediment that the pond is designed to trap and filter, so it doesn’t run into the lake and diminish water quality.

Goal: Knowledgeable stewards and partners generously support the system’s natural resources

It’s Raining. It’s Loring. With a stewardship grant from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, the Friends of Loring Park planted a 1,000-square-foot rain garden along the north and west sides of the Loring Park Community Center. The garden, featuring plants native to Minnesota, allows rain to soak into the ground instead of running off hard-packed turf directly into Loring Pond. Volunteers from Target Corporation and Green Mountain Coffee assisted in the installation.

Very Close Friends. The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary received a gift of $6,000 from Friends of the Wild Flower Garden to purchase native woodland wildflowers, ferns and sedges for planting projects along Violet Way in the garden.

Trees for Wirth. In October, volunteers from the Nordic Ski Foundation planted 75 trees donated by Bachman’s in Theodore Wirth Regional Park.

Leave a Legacy. Volunteers with experience in removing invasive plant species became Legacy Stewards. Each steward was assigned a section of parkland adjacent to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden & Bird Sanctuary for a garden season to monitor and remove any invasive species.
Goal: People play, learn and develop a greater capacity to enjoy life

Casting Call. A new fishing dock was installed at the northwest corner of Lake Calhoun. The location is considered superior to that of the former dock on the lake’s west side because it offers a variety of water depths. A new fishing dock was also installed on the southeast shore of Lake Hiawatha.

Open Water. Swimming in Minneapolis lakes has traditionally been confined to designated areas unless a permit is acquired. In response to requests from long distance swimmers, open water swimming was permitted on Tuesday evenings from the Lake Nokomis main beach across the lake to the 50th St. Beach, a distance of 1,200 yards or ¾ mile round trip.

Goal: Residents, visitors and workers enjoy opportunities to improve health and fitness

The Swing Set. Two new play areas for children opened at Lake Harriet. The new playground equipment and picnic facilities are located at Beard’s Plaisance along the west side of the lake, and William Berry Park near the Lake Harriet bandshell. The nature-themed equipment and play areas were funded by a $1 million grant from the Parks and Trails Fund of the Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

Big Kids. Participation in adult sand volleyball leagues soars. Nearly 3,000 adults participated in 2012.

Gridiron Gallop. Chad and Jenni Greenway, along with the Minnesota Vikings, hosted the annual 5K run and Kids Fun Run at Lake Nokomis. They were joined by other Vikings players and cheerleaders. Proceeds from the event went to support MPRB youth sports programs.

RBI – Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities. The MPRB partnered with the Minnesota Twins and the Twins Community Fund for the 20th year to bring youth baseball and softball to city parks. In 2012, the MPRB hosted the RBI World Series at Neiman and Parade fields. Twenty-four teams from around the United States and the Dominican Republic competed in three divisions. The Twins also hosted 800 youth baseball and softball players at a Twins game at Target Field.

Recreation
that inspires personal growth, healthy lifestyles and a sense of community

Hoops Done Right. The Minnesota Timberwolves and Minnesota Lynx Youth Basketball Academy partnered with the MPRB to offer three free basketball clinics at Bottineau Park in November. The clinics helped players of all ages develop skills and improve practice habits.

Goal: Volunteers make a vital difference to people, parks and community

What a City! One big reason we have a wonderful park system? Volunteers: more than 9,100 of them in 2012. They contributed about 157,000 hours as youth sports coaches, recreation center helpers, environmental stewards and mentors to make our parks what they are. An independent service estimates the value of that time at $3.5 million! And that doesn’t include 1,600 hours of time served by members of Citizens Advisory Councils.

Great Volunteers. Special awards were given in 2012 to five individuals for their remarkable volunteer service to Minneapolis parks: Tony Tolliver, Creekview; Richard Terrell, Green Central Gym; Nedra Robinson, McRae; Mara Larson, Wirth Off-road Trails; and, Nico Rocque, Folwell.

Great Organization. Friends of Loring Park was recognized as a group of volunteers that has made a difference in the city. They helped install Garden of the Seasons at Loring Park 15 years ago and still care for it, planting 2,500 annuals in the garden every spring. The group also raises money for other Loring Park projects, including the planting of more than 300 trees.

Rising Stars. Exceptional volunteer contributions from young people were also honored by the Park Board: Sophia Rose Negash, Powderhorn; Isabel Graciano Reyes, Powderhorn; Romeo Wright, Green Central Gym; LaChassittie “Chazzy” Taylor, Logan; Kailash “K” Acharya, East Phillips; and, Numonie Jones, Whittier.
**Goal: People connect through parks and recreation**

**Get Festive.** Parks were the focal point of summer community celebrations.

- North Mississippi Regional Park hosted the 27th Annual Juneteenth Festival, featuring live music, family-friendly activities and a feast of food for purchase.

- Red, White and Boom, the annual Fourth of July celebration at the Mississippi River featured concerts and movies at the Nicollet Island Pavilion, concerts at the Hennepin Bluffs bandstand, a fun run and, of course, fireworks over the river.

- 4th of July fireworks also lit up the sky over Powderhorn Park, co-sponsored by the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association.

**Gotta Go to Mexico.** The Monarch Festival at Nokomis Naturescape Garden celebrated the butterfly’s amazing migration from Minnesota to Mexico. Art, music, dance, and games helped raise awareness of the need to provide and protect habitat for monarchs. The Nokomis East Neighborhood Association helped produce the event. Funding was provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board through the Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. Other partners included the Mexican Consulate, Monarchs in the Classroom, Univision, Community Celebration of Place and UCare.

**Black History.** Black History Month was celebrated in many parks with special events ranging from movie showings at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park to a Soul Food Experience at Longfellow Park to painting African masks at North Commons. Lyndale Farmstead Park featured an evening of DJ’ed music by African American artists and many parks conducted games and quizzes around the subject of black history.

**Tour de Force.** Nearly 4,000 people participated in the annual Minneapolis Bike Tour along portions of the Grand Rounds Parkway system in September. 36 miles of parkway were closed to motorized traffic so cyclists could enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery in Minneapolis at a leisurely pace. A post-ride party at The Parade featured live music, food vendors and exhibits.

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**Goal: Parks provide a center for community living**

**Back to His Roots.** Arizona Cardinals all-pro wide receiver, Larry Fitzgerald Jr., donated money to resurface the outdoor basketball court and put up new backboards and baskets at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park. Fitzgerald played both football and basketball at the park as a boy. Fitzgerald was on hand to open the new courts along with Minnesota Lynx coach Cheryl Reeve and Lynx players Rebekkah Brunson and Monica Wright.

**Helmets, Too.** Fitzgerald also teamed up with football equipment manufacturer Riddell to donate 1,000 football helmets for use in MPRB youth football leagues. More than 900 Minneapolis youth ages 9-14 participate in the program.

**Barber Foundation helps North Commons Park.** The Barber Foundation sponsored uniforms for three North Commons youth football teams providing jerseys for each player. Marion Barber III and his brother Dominique shared their love of football and NFL experience with Minneapolis youth by providing a free clinic at North High School.

**Good Sports.** Youth sports teams were honored for exemplary sportsmanship during 2012 competition. The teams honored were Longfellow 10U baseball, Kenwood 11U softball, Linden Hills/Pershing track and field, Longfellow gymnastics, Logan Eastside 13U hockey, Farview 11U wrestling, Bottineau 11U boys basketball, Keewaydin 11U girls basketball, Lynnhurst 15U girls soccer, Pearl 13U open soccer, Waite Park 10U football, Longfellow 11U football, Sibley 13U girls soccer, Pearl 15U volleyball. Congratulations to all!

**Enjoy!** More than 200 concerts, in all musical styles, were presented at Lake Harriet, Minnehaha Falls, Bryant Square, Father Hennepin Bluffs and Nicollet Island last summer. A Friday evening series of concerts by nationally recognized artists, followed by a movie, were sponsored by Vita.mn. Movies in the Parks, sponsored by Xfinity, featured more than 50 movies which were shown in 30 parks across the city.
Goal: *Parks shape an evolving city*

**The Land Between.** The strip of land between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun was the subject of a multi-day design charrette to get public input into future uses. As this area along Lake Street has become more congested, safety and development concerns have arisen. The MPRB has earmarked $3.7 million for improvement to the Chain of Lakes Regional Park in 2015-16 and input from this creative session will help direct park planning.

**RiverFirst.** The initiative to remake the Upper River, begun in 2010, took great strides forward with the unveiling of new designs for the former Scherer Brothers site along the river in northeast Minneapolis. Designs from Tom Leader Studio/Kennedy Violich Architecture proposed to create natural habitat for birds, animals and plants by recreating Hall's Island in the river. The Park Board also signed contracts with the design team for further concepts and designs throughout the RiverFirst project area and another with Minneapolis Parks Foundation for project management of the RiverFirst initiative.

**A Plan for the Largest Park.** A concept plan for Theodore Wirth Regional Park – all 759 acres – was developed by a Community Advisory Committee after extensive community engagement and approved by the Park Board in 2012. The plan will provide the basis for a master plan that will prioritize investment and programming in the park for the next 20 years.

**Water Works.** In conjunction with the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, the MPRB initiated discussions of possible uses for the parkland adjacent to Mill Ruins Park on the Central Mississippi Riverfront. The site is referred to as Water Works after the former city water works on the site, but is better known as the past site of the Fuji-Ya restaurant. Possibilities for the site could include excavating more of the mill ruins or developing other historical, cultural or service-oriented activities.

**A Whole New Field.** Realizing a goal of the Comprehensive Plan, the MPRB initiated a community process to develop a plan for urban agriculture. Community members provided opinions through multiple outreach methods, with the goal to adopt and implement a supportive plan in 2013.

**Cedar Lake CAC.** Two Community Advisory Committees (CAC) crossed paths around Cedar Lake. One was appointed to provide input on trail improvements from Dean Parkway around the west shore of the lake. A second CAC was appointed to give its views on a Southwest Light Rail Transit corridor in the same vicinity.

Goal: *Park facility renewal and development respects history and focuses on sustainability, accessibility, flexibility and beauty*

**Wirth Beach Grand Opening.** The community celebrated the grand opening of major improvements to Wirth Beach including a 280-foot long boardwalk around the swimming area, playgrounds, sand volleyball courts and parking lot. A new boardwalk along the north end of Wirth Lake completed a trail around the lake and wetlands were restored to help improve water quality in the lake.

**New Siding.** The Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association allocated $33,000 to improve Park Siding Park. The funds were used to plant new trees and redesign garden beds (tended by neighborhood volunteers), and install garden irrigation, a new drinking fountain and two concrete table tennis tables.

**Advantage Bohanon.** Two tennis courts at Bohanon Park were replaced. New playing surfaces, perimeter fencing and net posts were funded by the MPRB’s Capital Improvement Program.

**Everybody Loves a Parade.** The Parade Parkway and parking lots at Parade Ice Garden were reconstructed in the fall.

**Grand Re-Opening.** The Phillips Community Center reopened after extensive renovations since 2009. The center, which houses a gym, computer lab, teen club and meeting rooms – as well as five new community tenants – received major upgrades to heating and air conditioning systems, a new roof, new lighting, new finishes and was brought up to code.
This Old House. The Park Board began a process to determine the best use of park property at 2529 13th Avenue South that had previously been the Waite House. Working with the Midtown Phillips Neighborhood Association, the Park Board obtained community input into the optimal use of the property to benefit the neighborhood and meet the financial objectives of the MPRB.

Court Sport Support. The planning division of MPRB began preparation of an activity plan for outdoor court sports by holding open houses. The process will continue to evaluate programs and facilities for court sports, including table tennis, pickleball, badminton, volleyball, basketball, shuffleboard, futsal and more.

Goal: Focused land management supports current and future generations

Another Piece of the Puzzle. The Park Board purchased a Mississippi riverfront property as part of the long-term goal of enlarging Above the Falls Regional Park along the length of the river in north and northeast Minneapolis. The property at 1720 Marshall St. NE adds 1.74 acres and 350 feet of river frontage to the Minneapolis park system. The MPRB purchased the property for $1.37 million, with the Metropolitan Council’s Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund contributing $609,000 and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization contributing $202,000 toward the purchase.

Goal: Financially independent and sustainable parks prosper

Toro, Twins, and Quality Ball Fields. Toro and the Minnesota Twins joined forces with the MPRB again to renovate two multi-purpose sports fields at Bryant Square. More than 80 Twins and Toro employees volunteered time to repair playing surfaces and fencing, and install benches for players and bleachers for spectators. Toro and the Twins donated the $20,000 needed to purchase the supplies for the renovation.

Toro Two. Toro also donated a Dingo Compact Utility Loader for use in gardens throughout the park system. Toro demonstrated the safe use of the loader at Lyndale Farmstead Park in August.
**Thank You, Hennepin County.** Hennepin County Youth Sports Program announced valuable new grants for youth sports facilities in Minneapolis Parks in 2012.

- **Elliot Park Soccer Field.** The county pledged $175,000 to construct a new synthetic turf field in the park. The success of similar fields at Currie and Stewart parks, which can accommodate many users in all weather, recommended the construction of another field.

- **Linden Hills Tennis Courts.** The county also announced a contribution of $80,000 toward the reconstruction of four tennis courts and a basketball court at Linden Hills Park. The Linden Hills community raised $140,000 in matching funds, including a contribution from the United States Tennis Association, for the courts, which will be completed in spring 2013.

- **Hennepin County also made contributions for new athletic equipment at Armature, Pearl Farview, Folwell, Kenny, Longfellow, Waite and Sibley parks.**

**Thank You Again, Hennepin County.** MPRB dedicated two renovated baseball fields that had received Hennepin County grants in previous years.

- **Pearl Park.** A county grant of $225,000 helped renovate a baseball field at Pearl Park. The field was named in honor of Harmon Killebrew the former Twins Hall of Fame player. Killebrew’s widow Nita, and former teammates Tony Oliva and Frank Quilici took part in the dedication.

- **Northeast Park.** The primary baseball field at Northeast was renovated in part with a grant of $300,000 from the county. New irrigation, fencing, infield, bullpens, dugouts, scoreboard and batting cages were installed. The project was also assisted by the Edison High School and Northeast Boosters. Edison High School will play its home baseball games on the field.

**No Quarters, More Benjamins.** Single space parking meters along Main Street and East River Parkway were converted to pay-by-space stations that accept credit cards, which increased parking revenue by about $8,000 a month.

**Edible Sandcastle.** A Community Advisory Committee selected Sandcastle Enterprises to be the food vendor at Lake Nokomis. Sandcastle will create a menu of fresh, healthy food that appeals to diverse tastes for their 2013 opening. The new venture will build on the success of other park food vendors Tin Fish, Sea Salt and Bread and Pickle.

**Goal: Easily accessible information supports enjoyment and use of the park and recreation system**

**Stay Informed.** Now anyone can stay up-to-date on park developments with GovDelivery email updates. News and event updates are delivered directly to inboxes. Users can select from a broad range of topics that interest them. From weather alerts to parkway closures to updates on planning projects, anyone can get the latest info on everything park related automatically. Click on the red envelope at minneapolisparks.org to sign up.

**200,000 Households.** MPRB program highlights and calendar reached that many households quarterly as a four-page insert in Minneapolis Public Schools Community Education mailings in 2012. Our message of fun, health, wellness and activity reaches more people, more economically by including our insert in the Community Ed mailing. The inserts will continue in 2013.

**Give Gifts.** Gift cards can now be purchased at most park locations and redeemed for rentals, fees, activities, programs or merchandise in MPRB facilities. Our online registration software enables us to process gift card payments and provide a one-stop shop for customers throughout the park system.
Goal: Positive recreation experiences and welcoming parks prevent crime

Safer Steps. MPRB masonry crew completed reconstruction of crumbling stone walls and steps descending to the lower gorge at Minnehaha Falls.

Staff Training. Park police expanded safety training for staff at recreation centers. In part as a result of safety training, recreation adopted new system-wide facility and gym safety guidelines.

Higher Visibility. Minneapolis Park Police worked with recreation and events staff to create a staff schedule of events to increase police visibility and generate goodwill with park users. Park police reviewed events and activities at every shift briefing. Park police participated in 101 events in July, 134 in August and 83 in September.

Goal: Residents, park visitors and staff make safe choices in parks

Big Hearts, Cool Heads. The MPRB recognized five individual citizens who made quick decisions to assist others in dangerous situations, contributing to a safer park environment. They are Britta Peterson, Michael Almsted, Nathan Wold, Masood Yunus and Adam Chapin.

Stay Safe. A Minneapolis Safety Camp for third through fifth graders was held at Theodore Wirth Regional Park. The camp, which teaches kids personal and social safety as well as first aid, is a joint effort of the Minneapolis Park Police and Minneapolis Police and Fire Departments.

Goal: Intervention and communication reduces safety concerns

Hot Enough for Ya? During 2012’s summer heat wave, aquatic hours were adapted to provide the best possible service to park users. On especially hot days, life-guard duty at eight beaches was extended an extra hour into the evening to help protect swimmers seeking to cool off. When high temperatures continued into the fall, 32 wading pools were kept open an extra week in September. Another routine heat-related safety policy was to close the 29 recreation centers that don’t have air conditioning when the heat index rises to unsafe levels.

Toughbook. Laptop computers called Toughbooks — mounted in squad cars for field use — improved communication for park police. Officer Keith Rowland received the Park Police Chief’s Award of Merit for his work to obtain the computers at almost no cost to the MPRB.

Props to Park Police. Officer James Huber received the 2012 Park Police Officer of the Year award and the Medal of Honor from the City of Minneapolis Police Department for his actions in response to an attack on him and his partner, Officer Katherine Hamme last summer. A man posing as a robbery victim stabbed both officers. Huber was stabbed first, but his body armor saved him from more serious injury. The attacker then stabbed Hamme and as he continued his attack on her, Huber shot and injured him. His actions likely saved Hamme from more serious injury or death. Hamme, who also suffered a serious concussion in the attack, was awarded the Medal of Valor from the City of Minneapolis Police Department and the Military Order of the Purple Heart “First Responder Award.”

Crimefighters. Officers Brian Woodfill, Jeffrey Johnson, Laura Blauert and Robert Mooney received awards from the City of Minneapolis Police Department for their work in arresting crime suspects.

Lifesavers. Officers Steven Paasch, Sam Xiong, Adam Swierczek, Robert Mooney and Chad Berdahl, received the Lifesaving Award from the City of Minneapolis Police Department for their work in preventing the suicides of two people.

An Officer Remembered. On May 15, 2012, friends, family and co-workers gathered in Minnehaha Park to dedicate a memorial in honor of Officer Mark Bedard. Officer Bedard died in the line of duty on November 9, 2007. The memorial honors his great sacrifice.

Goal: Communities, public and private partners, and staff cooperate to promote safety

New Bridge, Old Creek. A pedestrian bridge over the former mouth of Bassett’s Creek between James Rice Parkway and the Mississippi River was repaired after inspectors declared it unsafe. Six hundred feet of trails near the bridge were also upgraded and erosion protection measures implemented in the surrounding area.
**Sustainability**  Meet current park and recreation needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by balancing environment, economic and equity concerns

**Initiatives for Action.** The MPRB initiated five actions to meet sustainability goals.
1. Make buildings energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions
2. Re-organize waste management strategies
3. Events go green
4. Broaden the strategic application of the urban forest to include multiple benefits
5. Educate residents and staff on current sustainability practices

**No Effort Wasted.** Waste audits were conducted at MPRB Headquarters, six recreation centers and Lake Harriet by volunteers to determine how much garbage could be recycled or composted, instead of sent to the landfill. The effort was part of the MPRB’s commitment to reduce the amount of garbage generated and collected in Minneapolis parks.

**Thirstier Trees.** To protect the urban forest, a public awareness campaign was launched featuring Elmer the Elm Tree mascot touting the importance of watering trees.

**Got Views?** The MPRB conducted a community survey to collect public feedback on sustainability issues, which were identified in the 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan as one of five core organizational values upon which the Park Board’s work should be based.

**Got Data?** 49 MPRB buildings, including 45 recreation centers, two ice arenas, Headquarters and the Southside Operations Center, were added to the State of Minnesota’s B3 Benchmarking System. This vital tool allows the MPRB to effectively and efficiently track and compare utility use over time.

**Greener Events.** New guidelines were developed for programming more sustainable, green events.

**Ice Dream.** MPRB staff conducted research on the environmental and economic cost savings of upgrading Parade Ice Garden. Research reveals that the facilities, built in 1973 and 1989, could be operated much more efficiently if current R-22 refrigerant was replaced with ammonia, existing rink floors were replaced, existing HVAC and dehumidifier systems were replaced, and heat reclamation systems were installed. Renovation plans would result in lower operating costs, lower carbon emissions (the equivalent of taking 170 cars off the road) and higher revenues. Implementation is dependent on securing funding.

**Responsiveness and Innovation**  Anticipate and thoughtfully respond to the diverse needs of the city’s communities, continually seeking ways to better deliver park and recreation services

**Greener Meetings.** In May, the MPRB launched an online meeting portal so park commissioners, staff and interested individuals can search, access and retrieve meeting agendas, minutes and support materials online. The new portal eliminates the need to print info packets as long as 150 pages for all participants 25 times a year. The portal also enables on-demand viewing of bi-weekly commissioner meetings.

**Customer Service Training.** Mandatory customer service training was provided to all full-time and part-time Park Board employees. The 24 training sessions, conducted by our customer service staff with help from people across the organization, emphasized cultural awareness and helped develop customer service skills. The sessions emphasized service to both internal and external customers.

**Community Engagement Training.** Seventy staff members from across the organization participated in community engagement training that focused on building skills related to identifying stakeholders and reaching diverse and underserved audiences. Participants also learned how to design an effective engagement process. The training will help staff tailor programs, services and infrastructure to the communities the Park Board serves.
Technology Resource Center. The ITS department created a new resource center where staff can receive technical support and assistance, on-the-spot training and diagnostics, and explore new technology. The resource center will help all departments work more efficiently.

Visionary Leadership  Respect the vision and leadership that built the park and recreation system and recognize the need for ongoing leadership in achieving excellence

Above the Falls Re-Mastered. The original Above the Falls Master Plan created in 2000 was reviewed to reflect changing conditions along the river banks in north and northeast Minneapolis from Plymouth Avenue to the Camden Bridge and re-establish priorities. The plan is a joint effort of MPRB, City of Minneapolis, Above the Falls Citizens Advisory Committee and the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership.

Brownie Points. The Park Board approved the Brownie Lake Area Plan that focuses on improving trails and connections for hikers and cyclists, restoring native vegetation and improving water quality. Implementation of the plan will draw on $1 million obtained through the Park and Trails Fund created by the Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, the Federal Transportation Enhancement Act and local matching funds.

In Memoriam. Many park lovers in Minneapolis mourned the death of Jeff Winter in October. Jeff had been the president of People for Parks for many years and devoted considerable time and effort to organizing voluntary contributions to the park system.

Safety  Work safely to support a thriving work environment and an outstanding park experience for visitors

New Log Loaders. Four new log loaders were acquired as an important step in implementing our safety policy. The loaders will enable forestry crews to pick up tree debris, instead of chipping on site.

Safety Report Adopted. MPRB staff are implementing the four key recommendations that came out of a review of occupational health and safety practices. Two forestry supervisors have become Certified Tree Care Safety Professionals after attending a two-day course. An occupational health and safety officer will be hired in 2013. We are incorporating occupational health as an element of job design and equipment selection. We have begun tracking and sharing safety statistics with employees as key performance indicators. The goal is to reduce workplace accidents and injuries, and their associated costs, and to improve morale.

Independence and Focus  Independence allows the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to focus on providing and obtaining the resources necessary to accomplish its mission and form effective, responsible partnerships

Win, Win. The Park Board and City of Minneapolis continue to collaborate to cut costs on maintenance. This was demonstrated by spring maintenance of the Stone Arch Bridge by the City of Minneapolis Bridge Department, the seal coating of sections of many parkways, and maintenance of the Cedar Lake Trail by city crews.

Four Out of Five. Four of the five most-visited Regional Parks in the Metro area were in Minneapolis. The most visited — with 5.1 million visitors, as determined by the Metropolitan Council — was Chain of Lakes Regional Park. Ranked three through five among busiest parks were Mississippi River Gorge, which includes Minnehaha Park, Central Mississippi Riverfront and Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail. Only St. Paul’s Como Park, Zoo and Conservatory with year-round, indoor attractions at #2, prevented a Minneapolis sweep of the top five most popular parks.
Superintendent’s Office

**Leadership, vision, direction** The Superintendent’s Office is responsible for the executive management of the highly diverse services and operations of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Superintendent provides leadership, vision and direction to the Park Board’s service areas, implements Board policy, and works with the Board and leadership staff to craft strategic and financial planning objectives.

The Superintendent serves as an ambassador to the community and to other governmental agencies. The Superintendent’s Office oversees human resources; community outreach; and communications and marketing.

Planning Services

**Developing the system** Planning Services provides expertise to lead, advise and guide the development and redevelopment of the Minneapolis Park system. The division oversees park system analysis, community engagement for park planning and design, park master planning, real estate services, design and engineering, physical development and redevelopment, and construction permitting.

Recreation Services

**Providing visitor activities** Recreation Services provides expertise to lead, provide and create affordable recreational, cultural, educational, and leisure opportunities to benefit and enhance the lives of all Minneapolis residents. The division oversees recreation facility operations, including recreation centers, golf courses, aquatic facilities and beaches, ice arenas, cross-country skiing venues, and Wirth Winter Recreation Complex; recreation, education, and interpretive programming; use and event permitting; and athletic fields and complexes.

Administrative Services

**Supporting organization service delivery** Administrative Services provides expertise in supporting the Environmental Stewardship, Planning and Recreation service areas of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Administrative Services also provides support to the Board of Commissioners. The division oversees the organization’s information technologies; fiscal accountability, including accounting, financial and budget management, and procurement; records management; risk management; and customer service center.

Environmental Stewardship

**Caring for the system** Environmental Stewardship provides expertise for the care, maintenance, and safety of the park system. The division oversees the maintenance of the Minneapolis Park system’s physical infrastructure; equipment and fleet; natural areas and water resources; forestry; volunteer coordination; environmental education; park law enforcement; and emergency management.
### 2012 Budget

**Condensed Financial Report**

for the year ended December 31, 2012

#### Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Taxes</td>
<td>$46,645,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise</td>
<td>$15,606,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Aid</td>
<td>$7,570,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
<td>$5,021,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$74,843,385</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Expenditures

**Superintendent’s Office**
- Superintendent’s Office: $836,422
- Board of Commissioners: $604,242
- Communications and Marketing: $439,773
- Community Outreach: $1,356,436
- Human Resources: $398,524

**Administrative Services**
- Customer Service: $425,672
- Finance: $832,789
- City Management Fee, Contributions and Other: $1,632,688

**Environmental Stewardship**
- Environmental: $1,455,781
- Volunteer Services: $171,979
- Forestry: $9,521,857
- Maintenance: $19,596,793
- Summer Youth Employment — Teen Teamworks: $956,729
- Park Police: $5,014,441

**Planning Services**
- Planning: $1,151,655

**Recreation Services**
- Aquatics: $422,034
- Recreation: $9,529,040
- Enterprise: $14,449,325

**Other**
- Capital Projects: $4,887,271
- Capital Projects — Enterprise: $836,742

**Total Expenditures**

**$74,520,193**
2012 Distinctions

Minneapolis – Best Public Parks and Outdoor Access – Travel + Leisure Magazine
Minneapolis – Fittest City in America – Shape Magazine
Minneapolis – Most Bikeable City in U.S. – Walk Score
Minneapolis – Among 25 Best Cities for Walking – Prevention Magazine
Nicollet Island Pavilion – Best Outdoor Reception Site – Minnesota Bride
Cedar Lake – Best Lake – City Pages
West River Parkway – Best Place to Run – City Pages

Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board

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