

NACPRO 2006 AWARDS

Outstanding Public Official

Charles J. Shaughnessy

Charles J. Shaughnessy celebrated his 43rd Anniversary as a charter member of the Orange County (New York) Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board this spring, which sets a record for volunteer service to a County Board.

The Board of Supervisors appointed the affable Sugar Loaf resident to the original O.C. Park Commission, in 1963.

Under Shaughnessy's astute guidance, the policies were established for the acquisition, development and operation of an enviable County Park System.

Shaughnessy's accomplishments as chair for several terms included the advocating for the acquisition of the four dairy farms to create the Thomas Bull Memorial Park, Winding Hills, Cronomer Hill, Warwick and the D&H Canal Parks in the late 60's and early 70's, and the authorship of the 1988 Parks Assessment Master Plan.

Through his leadership as a trustee of the Seligmann farm estate, the 55 acres were donated to the Orange County Citizens Foundation. Trust funds were provided to restore the main residence, art barn, outbuildings and landscaping to bring the farm to mint condition.

The community and elected officials respect for his wisdom paved the way for many of the parks system improvements.

The National Recreation and Park Association presented Shaughnessy with its 1994 Volunteer Citizens Award in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Citizens Foundation honored Shaughnessy with the award of the coveted Ottaway Medal in 1994.

Shaughnessy is the "glue" that earned the Parks Advisory Board the public confidence in the integrity of the Board's recommendations and actions for the development of 10 premier parks, including three historic museums, Hudson River shoreline park, seven immaculately groomed and extensively developed parks that draw a million visitors annually on a minimum budget.

Through Shaughnessy's inspiration and drive, four Friends organizations were organized to enhance the Museums' collections of authentic memorabilia and extensive education programs.

Among the most celebrated facilities was the Orange County Arboretum with its dignified and breathtaking September 11 Memorial and gardens. Nearly \$1 million was donated for this priceless gem.

Shaughnessy's 43 years of service to parks elevates him as the longest standing park advocate in the State of New York.

Outstanding Public Official

James Deane

James Deane has served the parks and recreation needs of the community by providing strong leadership in the west suburban Twin Cities (Minnesota) area for 41 years. Prior to being elected to the Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners in 1997 and serving as chair for eight years, Deane was Park Board Commissioner for the City of Maple Grove five years, and on the city's council for 21 years, 13 years as mayor. As a longtime member of the Twin Cities running community, coaching for over 40 years, Deane is also an invaluable advocate for trails.

Deane has fostered consistent leadership and unity with the Board of Commissioners. Five of seven commissioners have served over eight years with uncommon loyalty; each is dedicated to a legacy of excellence.



Deane's leadership is underscored by a 2003 Community Needs Assessment: the Park District scored 90% or above on all service satisfaction attributes. Championed by Chair Deane, the Board increased public access by their 2005 action eliminating the Park District's long-term reliance on parking fees, a known barrier to some in the community. Now at 5 million, annual visits have more than doubled and public awareness is at 94%.

Deane is extremely valuable to the Park District's fiscal accountabilities: by securing annual state funds of \$2 million, supporting bond sales of \$86.3 million and a capital program of \$36 million, annual budgets have grown to \$60 million. Recent capital projects include: the addition of 60+ miles of regional trails, three regional parks, two golf courses, a working farm and historic village. Innovative facilities include: snow making and lights for cross-country skiing, and chlorinated swim ponds. Under his leadership, the Park District has annually received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, and two recognized AAA Bond Ratings.

Lifetime Award

Ralph Richard

Ralph Richard served the field of parks and recreation for nearly 40 years including the past 21 years as Executive Officer for the Oakland County (Michigan) Parks and Recreation Commission.

During that time, Richard has directed operations and improvements for the 11-park, 6,000-acre system. Many innovative additions were made during Richard's leadership including Michigan's first refrigerated toboggan run and the system's second water park. While Executive Officer, the parks system earned dozens of state and national awards.

Throughout his career, Ralph Richard has advanced the profession for his service at the city, township, county, state and national levels. He has served as President of NACPRO as well as president and treasurer of the Michigan Recreation and parks Association



Lifetime Award

William Sickles

William Sickles began work with the Suffolk County (New York) Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation in 1968, two years after the department was founded. He is a true park professional having served in a number of positions, including Laborer, Park Foreman, Golf Course Manager, Park Supervisor III, County Park Superintendent, and Senior County Park Superintendent. In his current role, he is responsible for the operation and maintenance of a park system comprised of 50,000 acres of developed and preserved lands, including golf courses, ocean beaches, historic sites, marinas, and many other amenities. Suffolk County is home to 1.5 million residents who are vitally concerned with the quality of their environment and neighbor to 10 million more in the New York City metropolitan area.



Senior Superintendent Sickles is planning to retire before year's end in 2006. His career has included many and varied landmark successes. Under his leadership, Suffolk County was one of the first to manage golf courses successfully under legislation severely limiting the use of chemical applications. Each year he appears before a Citizens Advisory Committee to report on the results of this program. He was in the forefront of developing the department's Piping Plover Protection Program which continues protection of this endangered species today. He has developed strong and lasting relationships with a number of interest groups for the benefits of all park users, including Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, the department's Sportsmen Advisory Committee, several chapters of the National Audubon Society, and many local advocacy groups. He has fostered youth development by accommodating hundreds of outings for Boy Scouts and their merit badge projects.

Through all this he has been successful in weathering budget cuts and a shrinking staff while providing outdoor recreation opportunities for a growing population. Mr. Sickles devotion to the Parks Department and those who depend on it to enhance their lives, makes him worthy of the NACPRO Lifetime Award.

Fellow Award

Sue Goodwin

Fellow award was established to recognize an exemplary professional currently employed in county level park and recreation fields. This year's winner is: Sue Goodwin

As coordinator for Los Angeles (California) County's Healthy Parks Program, Sue Goodwin has provided renewed vision and purpose for parks personnel and the communities served. By attending to cultural factors impacting health and community and slashing through red tape inhibiting service delivery, Ms. Goodwin forged partnerships with health services providers and built a bridge for direct delivery of services in some highly marginalized areas of the county.

Her enthusiastic approach inspired a cultural shift within her department and motivated parks personnel. She raised the profile of parks and recreation services and positioned parks as a focal point for health and community problem solving.

Ms. Goodwin's research at Healthy Parks sites resulted in planning for service delivery based on needs of the community. Her culturally-sensitive information gathering has allowed program planning responsive to community needs.

Ms. Goodwin's awards include the 2006 California Parks & Recreation Society Citation Award; the Ann Seeley Fellowship to attend the 2005 Physical Activity and Public Health Practitioner's Course on Community Interventions; the 2002 Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation Director's Award; and the 2001 Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor's "Improving Lives of Children, Youth and Families" Award. She has presented workshops, training and lectures and addressed government entities, including the California State Assembly



Outstanding Contributor

O.C. Williams

Over the past 15 years, O.C. Williams has been an exceptional example of how one individual's dedication and contributions to Three Rivers Park District (Minnesota) and the public it serves can make an ongoing and lasting impact. O.C. is particularly dedicated to increasing access to Park District services for populations that are underrepresented, or have physical, or financial barriers. Park systems across the country are host to thousands of events produced by individuals and organizations in the community. The Park District first got to know O.C. as an event organizer and has come to experience O.C. as an amazing, giving individual.

Beginning 15 years ago, O.C. and other area runners saw a need for a race in the Upper Midwest featuring unique opportunities for a run in a natural setting with "ultra distances." Working with Park District staff, O.C set about organizing what is now the 15th Annual Trail Mix in Hyland Lake Park Reserve, an USATF sanctioned race that includes 50K/25K Solo and 50K Team events. O.C. chose to direct net proceeds from the race to the Park District in a way that would best serve individuals with special needs. This race was, however, just the beginning of his contributions.

Consistent contributions from O.C. and the Trail Mix have totaled over \$60,000 and have been used to fund the purchase of adaptive outdoor recreation equipment and other ADA enhancements. O.C. also contributes in other invaluable ways. He is an outspoken advocate, promoting the Park District's natural and recreational resources. As an avid golfer, O.C. serves on the First Tee Advisory Committee and also a Charity Open volunteer (providing affordable and accessible youth golf) and regularly volunteers at other youth golf events. How inspiring, the impact of a single individual, even more so when one learns that O.C. is legally blind.



Outstanding Volunteer

Mike Flaughter

Mike Flaughter is not just a volunteer for the Santa Clara (California) County Parks Department; he's a volunteer that wants to make his community a better place to live. About three years ago, Mike adopted a stretch of the four-mile-long Penitencia Creek Trail near his home. Little did he know he adopted not just a trail but also the surrounding park! The trail was littered with trash, homeless and gangs. Untrimmed trees made it easy for unsavory characters to hide in the darkness of the overhang. The concrete wall along the creek was a popular target for graffiti artists and vandals left hundreds of broken bottles. The creek along the trail would flood each year leaving behind mud that would make it impassable for weeks.

Mike saw a tremendous need and went into action. He determined which areas of the trail the county, city and the Santa Clara Valley Water District owned. He organized meetings with these public agencies and persuaded them to take action with him. He organized cleanups that removed 5,000 pounds of trash, including mattresses, couches, shopping carts and 100 sections of metal roofing that had been placed along the fence decades ago to keep people out of the orchards. He has put in over 1,500 hours of his time working with other volunteers or with crews from the county, city or water district. He's removed graffiti, painted benches, tables, signposts, guardrails, a gate and a 45-foot long bridge. He persuaded the city to put up new signs and pushed Caltrans to fix breaks in the fences along the 1-680 trail crossing. His biggest accomplishment was a small-flood control project he convinced the water district and county into doing. Now users of the trail, including schoolchildren, can use the trail safely.



Outstanding Support Organization

The James M. Cox Arboretum Foundation

The James M. Cox Arboretum Foundation is a major Private sector supporting arm of Cox Arboretum Metro Park located in Dayton Ohio.

The James M. Cox Foundation has been instrumental in supporting all aspects Cox Arboretum Metro Park and Fiver Rivers Metro Parks for over 40 continuous years. Under the current direction of Jay Woodhull the foundation has grown into a community based group of corporate and individual supporters who support education. development and stewardship of the Arboretum.

The James M. Cox Arboretum foundation completed a major fund drive which raised over 6 million dollars and built the beautiful Zorninger Education Campus.. Additional supportive functions include major funding toward Volunteer and staff development, Children. Family and Adult education as well as support for grounds development. In 2006 the foundation will continue to fund and develop the Arboretum's master plan which will guide the facility into the next century. Foundation members are part of the over 350 volunteers who contributed 32,000 hours of service to the Arboretum last year.



Park and Recreation Program Award

Speed Dating in the Parks

Three Rivers Park District (Minnesota) is known for innovation in outdoor programs, however, the newest program Speed-Dating in the Parks is a standout. The Park District was interested in programs targeted specifically to adults. Initially challenged regarding the appropriateness of Speed-Dating in the Parks, Jenni Mead, part-time recreation programmer counter, "What a great opportunity for singles who enjoy being outdoors and are physically active to meet others with similar interests, a healthy alternative to bars." While singles are already visiting the parks, the over 27,000 acres and 200 miles of trails makes meeting Mr. or Ms. Right next to impossible.

Two February sessions of Speed-Dating in the Parks were offered, one for those 22-33 years of age and another for those 30-45. The program development was fairly straightforward. Both sessions offered a candlelit snowshoe hike, spending five minutes with each date, a brief hot cocoa social afterwards, and requested contact information e-mailed following the event. It wasn't long before the public and media embraced this program. As a lead up to Valentines Day, media across the Twin Cities enjoyed a supporting role by assisting in balancing the numbers of men and women registered for each program.

Both sessions filled to capacity with a waiting list. With no snow, the session featured a candlelit hike. Most participants received 6—7 contacts from their speed-dates. We have learned that there is tremendous demand for Speed-Dating in the Parks. The public has requested sessions for older adults and that other activities be offered. Coming up in June, speed-dating hikes are scheduled, additional sessions for those 40-55 and 50+ years of age. June program promotion has not begun and the sessions are filling. Staff is considering speed-dates for biking, canoeing, kayaking, inline skating, and even dog walking.



Park and Recreation Program Award

ZAP!

"Zap!" is a public art project that uses utility boxes as the canvas to bring art to neighborhoods in Clark County, Nevada. During Las Vegas's 10031 birthday celebration in 2005, the Las Vegas Centennial Committee sponsored a 'City of 100 Murals Project.' The ZAP! project was part of the Murals Project, coordinated by the Clark County Parks and Recreation department's Public Arts Supervisor; and supported by Centennial Committee funding and 100% matching funds from Clark County's Neighborhood Services Division. Neighborhood Services staff work closely with residents to increase their voice in County government by developing a strong sense of community. Although Zap! is an art program, its most important purpose was to help create community.



A call to artists was issued, requiring that applicants reside in Clark County. Each art piece was to relate to the past, present or future of Las Vegas; and a relationship to the Winchester neighborhood was encouraged. The relationship to the valley or the community may be evoked in a literal way or in a broadly abstract one. Instead of asking artists to submit a proposal, they were asked to submit examples of prior work and not commit to a firm idea until after they had been selected and had met with members of the neighborhood. Sixty artists applied and 10 were selected.

This was an outstanding project because it showed the powerful way public art can create community in a neighborhood. The neighborhood is physically changed; the ten artists painted 35 boxes and 13 metal posts; and the entire budget for the project went to support the careers of local artists. The unexpected volume of feedback and publicity emphasized the success and the importance of the project in creating a feeling of community and pride.



Park and Recreation Program Award

Young Achievers

"Young Achievers" started in Mecklenburg County, NC in September 2004. The purpose of this innovative program is to provide recreational and educational experiences for homeless youth during an after school mentorship program. It's the goal of the program, "Young Achievers," to provide stable, appropriate leisure education to homeless children in the school system.

Additionally, recreational and educational activities are used as an intervention to decrease negative behaviors and characteristics of homeless children (i.e., anger, lack of concentration, poor self-esteem, inappropriate communication skills, etc.) During the development process, the Recreation Specialist with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation partnered with A Child's Place, an agency that works with homeless children in Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system, and Walter G. Byers Elementary School to create the program, "Young Achievers."

The program is conducted during the academic school year with one session being taught per week. Each session is conducted weekly - 1 hour per week. The program accommodates approximately 20 - 30 youth, representing grades kindergarten through fifth. Each academic year consist of group projects, artwork, guest speakers, creative writing, mentoring, and field trips to theatrical productions. The group project helps to develop a sense of community through teamwork and increases self-esteem and self-worthiness. Volunteers from local businesses and corporations spend their time mentoring students and assisting with weekly activities.



Class I Park and Recreation Facility Award

(Facilities in counties with a county population of 100,000 or less)

The Pavilion

Residents of Scott County (Kentucky) and surrounding areas know when "The Pavilion" is mentioned you're talking about family, Friends, and lots of fun! The four-year-old community center is a state of the art facility that is operated by the Georgetown-Scott County Parks and Recreation Department.



This 56,400 square foot facility opened in August of 2000 with a price tag of \$8,000,000. It offers an aquatic area complete with a competitive/hip pool and a separate leisure pool. The leisure pool offers many play features and plenty of moving water. The facility also has one of the largest indoor slides in the state of Kentucky (108 ft. long, 3 stories tall). There is a gymnasium that consists of two regulation basketball courts and it is used for numerous programs and activities. A 3-lane track that overlooks the gymnasium is very popular with walkers and runners trying to get a workout. The facility also has a conference room, a dance studio, a fitness room, a sitting area, locker rooms, offices, and a multi-purpose room with kitchen. Parks and Recreation officials recently lobbied for a \$270,000 expansion that has just been completed to add an additional 1,400 square feet. The expansion doubled the size of the fitness area, added a child care room, and an additional multi-purpose room.

An average of 421 people utilize the facility every day. The Pavilion provides the department's staff with opportunities to offer an increasing number of programs and recreation experiences in the areas of fitness, childcare, sports, recreation programs and special events. The staff continuously searches for and implements new and exciting programs. In this regard the Pavilion is always changing so each visit it is a new experience. The program format of the Pavilion allows the user to dictate their usage pattern. Members of the community can choose whether to just drop in and play a pick - up game of basketball or to play in an organized league. By allowing the individual to choose whether they want to participate in an organized activity or a self-directed activity the Pavilion strives to meet the recreational needs of the entire community.

Class I Park and Recreation Facility Award

(Facilities in counties with a county population of 100,000 or less)

Turner Lake

Turner Lake Complex in Newtown County, Georgia opened in October, 1999 with exceptional protective environmental measures in place. The complex includes a pavilion, a boardwalk and trail, wildlife viewing platform and ballparks. Some of the environmental measures are: natural buffer zones in the parking areas to prevent runoff and erosion; preservation of natural plants and trees; replacement/addition of trees/plants as needed; preserving the lake by using triploid grass carp to naturally remove Southern Pondweed; restocking the lake with fish in conjunction with GDNR; and partnering with local/state groups to create/fund a natural trail system beginning at the park, continuing throughout the county.



Class III Park and Recreation Facility Awards

(Facilities in counties with a county population of 200,000 but less than 500,000)

Natural Areas Preservation

The Washtenaw County (Michigan) Natural Areas Preservation Program was initiated by the County Board of Commissioners through the passage of a Natural Areas Ordinance and approved after a majority vote in the November 2000 election. The ordinance provides procedures and standards for purchase of natural land by the County, and innovatively, contains provisions for the formation of a group of citizens/experts to advise the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, the program administrator. County residents with expertise in land trust/conservation, wildlife management, environmental education, real estate/development, land use planning, botany/forestry and fisheries/aquatic ecology comprise the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee. NATAC identifies parcels of land which contribute to preservation of the natural, ecological diversity of Washtenaw County. The land selection process is based on carefully selected and clearly articulated, objective criteria. The goal of the program is not to preserve open space, but specifically natural areas land that constitutes a key component of the high quality of life enjoyed, and highly prized, by County residents. Properties recommended by NATAC are reviewed by

the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, the County Department of Planning and Environment and the Local Unit of Government. Land purchased is maintained by the Parks and Recreation Commission as nature preserves for passive recreation uses.

Community and Environmental Benefits

- Preserves high quality natural areas and the native plant and animal communities that inhabit them (particularly State of Michigan Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern species)
- Conserves natural resources: soils, public water resources including waterways, groundwater recharge areas, headwater areas, and wetlands
- Preserves from intensive development lands that are fragile or that have environmental resources that serve the whole community best as natural areas
- Provides areas for human appreciation of natural areas: for study, quiet reflection, photography, bird watching, walking, jogging and quiet pastimes
- Through innovative, creative and diverse collaborations supplements the existing network of protected lands, thereby maximizing the public benefit

Funding and Purchases

The NAPP is supported by a county-wide 1/4 mill tax (millage) for the period of 2002 -2011. Approximately \$27.5 million will be generated for land acquisition during this 10 year period. Land protected to date, which includes some of the most valuable habitat in the region:

716 acres in fee, 64 acres in a conservation easement

780 acres in total in 5 townships

50% increase in total parkland area

Total expenditure for purchases \$6.24 million (map and chart attached) Land purchased receives only ancillary improvements to facilitate access such as low impact trails, small parking lots, and interpretive signage. The public is kept informed and involved in the process through public service announcements, the WCPARC quarterly newsletter and other publications and postings on the County website, which are updated regularly. Public support for the program is extremely strong and vocal.



Class III Park and Recreation Facility Awards.

(Facilities in counties with a county population of 200,000 but less than 500,000)

Synthetic Turf

Howard County (Maryland) Department of Parks and Recreation is recognized for a unique program involving installation of synthetic field turf.

Normally, athletic fields in the region of Howard County accommodate only 200 to 300 games per year, assuming that practices are limited. In Howard County, with the local demand for sports, lighted fields are accommodating in excess of 1,000 games a year. The stress on the fields has resulted in frequent renovation periods of six months to a year where fields are not available for play. Upon re-opening, fields quickly reverted to its high stress turf condition. A significant upgrade of fields occurred in April of 2005 with the renovation of a field with the synthetic surface, FieldTurf on a pre-existing field at Rockburn Branch Park.



The new turf field requires minimum maintenance (periodic brushing) and can handle year round scheduling and is an all weather surface. This new field will be able to handle more than 1000 games with no interruptions in play and can be played on during winter months. Traditionally grass fields in the area are closed from mid November through mid March. The replacement field is permanently lined to accommodate football and soccer to NCAA / FIFA standards. The vendor placed tiny spots as marking points for lacrosse and field hockey. Staff lines the field for these sports with special paint that lasts the entire season and that can be washed off with a special solution. As of July 2005 this field has hosted soccer camps, youth tackle football, adult football, youth and adult soccer and lacrosse. In the winter of 2006 this field is scheduled to host adult Soccer and football programs.

Class IV Park and Recreation Facility Award

(Park and recreation facilities in counties with a population over 500,000)

Millennium Park

Kent County Michigan's Millennium Park is a reclamation project that will result in a fabulous park. Twice the size of Central Park in New York City, Millennium Park is the community's gift to itself in celebration of the millennium in 2000. The 1500 acre park is combined with existing county parks at each end to create a 5 mile long greenway. This includes the riverfront on both sides of the Grand River, for a total of 10 miles of riverfront. The land that makes up Millennium Park includes over 90 parcels that needed to be acquired and is best known for its gravel pits, sand mining, gypsum mining, oil and gas and landfills.

The Millennium Park project has put the County of Kent and Kent County Parks front and center in the community. It has been such since 1999 when the project was introduced to the public. The project has been on the front page of the paper and shown on television numerous times. The first phase of the recreation core opened in the summer of 2003 to rave reviews. The six acre beach had the feel of Lake Michigan. 2005 was the Splashpad's first full year of operation and finished out the key elements of the recreation core.

The project is approximately \$30M with the County providing \$15.5M from the general fund, \$5.5M from state DNR grants and \$9M from foundations and community contributions. Millennium

Park is the best melting pot of people in all of West Michigan and it is only a five minute drive from downtown Grand Rapids. The beach house leaves people in awe by its design and materials. The shade sail provides the best opportunity to sit and people watch, and the clock tower is a major focal point and great place for grandparents and kids to have their pictures taken.



Class IV Park and Recreation Facility Award

(Park and recreation facilities in counties with a population over 500,000)

Western Trails Park



Western Trails Park is a unique park/facility, designed to combine both a traditional neighborhood park and equestrian facilities, both serving the needs of the community, located in Las Vegas, Nevada. The park was designed with an "old west" theme by local Landscape Architect Rich Marriotti, on seven acres of land, and features a traditional neighborhood park playground, picnic and play areas, as well as an equestrian trailhead.

The park's design features a "general store" restroom; five covered wagon style picnic shelters encompassing a fire pit; huge shaded children's playground, swings with resilient surfacing, concrete walkways; parking and security lighting; open lawn for play and large gatherings, state-of-the-art irrigation system with pump station and fully-automated controls, and distinctive western-themed entrances, portals, fencing, signage and trash receptacles; water conserving desert landscaping, and dry wash and cobble drainage ways. One of the most notable features is the 50" high windmill. Residential Construction Tax monies were used to fund the park.

The park has a unique design solution, as the off-street parking was organized to separate the two functions of the park by providing asphalt parking for park use, and a recycled-asphalt parking area on the equestrian side, to be used by horse enthusiasts. This special surface allows horses and riders to safely unload and move from trailers to the beginning of the equestrian trails. The parking area also has an "exit only" egress to be used during riding and special events only. Both the restroom and playground are ADA approved, and the playground features a rubberized safety surface, as well as the walkways and picnic areas.

Maintenance Facility Award:

(To recognize a maintenance facility of unique design which are incorporated into park settings)

Hills & Dales MetroPark

This award was presented for the Operations building at Hills & Dales MetroPark located in Dayton Ohio. This beautiful operations building was constructed in 2005 by Joe Becks Construction Company. Style and design was a combination of internal (Five Rivers MetroParks Staff) and professional Architectural services from Brown & Bills also of Dayton. The 2,000 Square Foot facility was constructed to serve as the primary operations center for the 55 acre park.

Hills & Dales MetroPark is an Olmstead designed park and contains many of the original features that were constructed in the 1920s & 1930s. It was the designer's intent to blend this new building into both the natural and historical setting by combining Craftsman and Prairie style Architecture into the exterior of the building. The building contains many natural materials, such as peeled logs, board & batten siding and a stone foundation.



Operational Facility Award:

(To recognize a facility of unique design)

Douglas County Events Center

This years winner is the Douglas County (Colorado) Events Center that opened its doors to the community on Saturday, August 4, 2001. The 49,390 square foot multi-purpose building was one of the first phases of the Douglas County Fairgrounds Regional Park Master Plan approved by the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners in 1996.

The Center consists of a 30,000 square foot exhibit hall, a 3,330 square foot conference room that can be divided into 2 rooms, a professionally equipped kitchen, the Fairgrounds Administration offices, storage areas, mechanical areas and building support areas. Other features of the facility are telephone and hi-speed data connections, performer rooms, locker rooms, ticket office, public address system, and acoustic treatments on the walls for sound quality.

The facility has been operating for the past 4 years under the guidelines of the mission statement:

Provide unique and functional facilities to accommodate a diversity of activities including civic recreational, entertainment, business, traditional youth activities and the annual county fair for the community with an appreciation for the urbanization and the rural agricultural history of Douglas County.

Versatility is the key; the Center was designed with multi-purpose use in mind and offers several options for functions. The Exhibit Hall can accommodate up to 3,400 people seated in a concert setting, utilizing both wooden bleachers and chairs. For a trade show we have the capacity for 134 10' x 10' booths. It can host banquets, dances and fundraisers seating up to 1100 people. Additionally, the Center is a perfect mix for sporting events such as wrestling, mixed martial arts and Irish dance.

In addition to special events, the Events Center also serves as a community meeting place. The conference rooms allow for smaller groups from 15 to 200. As an example, the local school district conducts an average of 6 off site meetings/trainings per month. And once again the multi-purpose in nature of the facility shows: banquets, receptions and parties can all be accommodated in the conference rooms.

Furthermore, the fee structure enables non-profit organizations the use of the facility at a reduced rate. This enables the facility to fulfill several needs within the community.



Environmental Award

Bartel Grassland

Cook County (Illinois) Bartel Grassland, is a conservation success story for grassland birds and plants; for partnering agencies and individuals who made it happen; and for 5.4 million residents who benefit from stunning views and bird-songs of this large prairie restoration.

Restoring the 375-acre fallow farmland's natural hydrology and native plant populations, and removing 9-miles of hedgerows, tripled the remnant grassland; a rare native habitat, home to the highest avian conservation priority in the region.

Grassland bird populations increased, including the four most imperiled; Savannah, Grasshopper

and Henslow's Sparrows, and Bobolinks; and wintering Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers have returned for the first time since the 1970's.



Environmental Award

HUTCHINSON RAVINE RESTORATION

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve

In April 2001, after nearly a decade of work, the United States Department of the Army completed its transfer of the northern 259 acres of land at the former Fort Sheridan Army Base to the Lake County (Illinois) Forest Preserve District and the people of Lake County for open space, recreation and preservation. The property included an existing 18-hole golf course; the historic parade ground, 50 acres of oak-hickory and maple-linden woodland; 3/4-mile of scenic bluff overlooking Lake Michigan; and two major ravines, which represent the most significant natural features of the property.

Ravines along Lake Michigan provide a unique microclimate, allowing the survival of rare plant communities not found anywhere else in Illinois. Historically, the ravines themselves had been carved out by prehistoric flood events and normally very little water drained down their length due to their relatively small watersheds. However, only later, with development occurring upstream and the Army's activities at the Fort itself, did dramatic changes take place. Large volumes of storm water were concentrated and dumped into the head of the ravines, causing two-foot to fifteen-foot deep erosion gullies in the ravine bottoms and loss of mature hardwood trees. Watersheds were changed and storm sewers concentrated dumping water onto the sides of the ravines, causing severe blow-outs on their side slopes.

Using a combination of unique natural, low technology methods (including logs, stone, special biodegradable erosion control blankets, steel cables, anchors and native seeding) designed by Hey & Associates, Inc., Volo, Illinois, the ravine bottoms and side slopes were repaired and restored at a total cost of \$641,000.00. Beginning in August 2005, the restoration efforts included slope protection, repairing eroded slopes and gullies, changing the course of the stream in some locations, reducing the velocity of the storm water and the removal of side slope drain outlets. The work, completed in November 2005, will not only serve as restoration, but will prevent future erosion and degradation from occurring.

The Hutchinson Ravine restoration work is positioned to be a model for similar projects in the future.



AWARDS Sponsors

NACPRO wishes to thank the fine corporations that helped to sponsor the 2006 awards program: **R.J. Thomas Manufacturing Company**, makers of Pilot Rock site equipment; **Biological Mediation Systems**, providing pre-engineered and prefabricated restroom buildings including structures for waterless or traditional waterborne installations; and **Sun Ports** providing shade solutions for everything under the sun.

