

## 2012 NACPRO Award Recipients

This year NACPRO recognized 22 county and regional park districts with 32 awards. NACPRO recognizes excellence in county and regional park districts to share creative solutions and encourage others to innovate.

### Outstanding Public Official

#### **Bill Campbell, Orange County, California**

Bill Campbell has served on the Board of Supervisors since 2003 and in that time has significantly influenced and improved the landscape of Orange County park land with



his work on the Irvine Ranch Open Space and many other projects. One of his goals was increasing public access to the Irvine Ranch Open Space. Over the course of just one year a new trail was constructed, a viewing deck built, monthly open access

days offered to the public, and hundreds of programs with thousands of participants were implemented, ranging from vigorous hikes to stewardship days.

#### **Greg Cox, County of San Diego Department of Parks & Recreation, California**

Greg Cox has a passion for trails. He is a leading the effort to develop the Coastal Trail along 75 miles of County coastline with a personal commitment to make San Diego the first County in California to complete its portion of the trail. This 1200 mile trail will stretch from Mexico to Oregon and allow trail enthusiasts to see hear and smell the Pacific Ocean. His tireless work has been instrumental in securing millions of dollars for the Bayshore Bikeway, a 24 mile trail around San Diego Bay. Thanks to Greg's foresight, these popular coastal trails link to the County's regional trail network including the southernmost portion of the Pacific Crest Trail, which literally offers users a nature path along the western edge of the United States.

## Outstanding Contributor Award

### **Jim Bernhard, The Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Jim Bernhard is founder of the Shaw Groups and an outstanding contributor to the Baton Rouge community and active member of the Baton Rouge Basketball and Volleyball Associations. Jim is helping BREC in the funding of a new 5 million dollar air conditioned gym in Perkins Road Community Park through in-kind and monetary donations exceeding 3 million dollars. Through this cooperative endeavor, Jim Bernhard contributes a great deal to the community by helping BREC achieve its mission to provide quality parks and recreational opportunities for all residents East Baton Rouge Parish.

### **Richard and Dorothy Hanger, Shawnee County Parks & Recreation, Kansas**

On November 13, 2008 Shawnee County Parks and Recreation hosted a press conference at Lake Shawnee to publicly launch the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Foundation. Dick and Dorothy Hanger were instrumental in initiating the concept for the developing the Foundation. They generously pledged \$50,000 to preserve natural areas for human enjoyment and wellbeing. The Dick and Doty Hanger Endowment will help insure the Dick and Doty Hanger Family Preserve will be constructed and maintained. Shawnee County Parks and Recreation appreciates the deep commitment that Dick and Dotty have displayed by their gift to the Community.

## Outstanding Support Organization Award

### **Friends of the Steinmetz Senior Center, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation, California**

The Friends of the Steinmetz Park Senior Center has supported the Steinmetz Park Senior Center and the Southeast Recreation District of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation for over 11 years. Last year the 18 Board members and 600 members volunteered over 9,000 hours of community service and donated much needed services and supplies to the center. With the help of the friends, the center expanded its programming immensely.

## Outstanding Volunteer Award

### **Regina Ellis, Oakland County Parks & Recreation Commission, Michigan**

Regina Ellis, a volunteer at Addison Oaks County Park in Leonard Michigan, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in October 2010. She believes that working with children has helped her to find a different direction in life, "I think that MS has humbled me. I now appreciate things that some people cannot. It's made me realize what I wish I knew was important 10 years ago." By helping others you bring something to their life. Regina Ellis's continuous support for the Oakland County Parks and Recreation programming is heartwarming. Everything she does for others makes a difference through her kind and thoughtful spirit.

## **Marge Rutan, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks & Recreation, California**

Marge Rutan has been volunteering at the Steinmetz Senior Center since 2000. Her average week consists of running the day-to-day operations in the center's kitchen from 7:30 am to 12:30 PM. She also plans monthly excursions and field trips for the seniors. Marge is also the Bingo Operations Assistant for the Center's weekly bingo game. In that capacity she serves as the runner, caller, and kitchen assistant. Every year Ms. Rutan astonishes her peers with the amount of work, dedication, and unsurpassed passion she demonstrates each day.

### Park and Recreation Program Class I Award

## **McHenry County Conservation District, Illinois**

On September 23-25, 2011, McHenry County Conservation District hosted a three-day educational event "A Weekend of Restoration Projects" billed as "A vacation that makes a difference". Focusing on a 0.7 acre wetland basin filled with agricultural sediment, the Turtle Marsh Restoration Project took place in Glacial Park, 3,500 acre natural area in Northeast McHenry County. A three inch rain drenched the county on the Sunday following the event and on Monday morning the basin held a pool of water for the first time in decades. This kind of event can happen anywhere in the country; all that is needed is a small area of damaged land and an agency willing to do the planning.

### Park and Recreation Program Class II Award

## **Hamilton County Park District, Ohio**

The Kids Outdoor Adventure Expo, presented by the Hamilton County Parks District with support from Ohio River Way, Inc. is an annual event held in June in Cincinnati, Ohio. This Expo offers schools, camps, youth groups, and families a unique opportunity to experience educational and recreational activities about the environment. This free one day event brings together a variety of environmental organizations to demonstrate outdoor activities and teach about sustainability. This program provides environmental education to children of all ages and backgrounds, that might not otherwise have the opportunity to paddle on a lake, go fishing, or see a live animal. The Kids Outdoor Expo had a record attendance of over 4,000 in 2011.

## **San Bernardino County Regional Parks, California**

Established by the Department of Regional Parks, the Junior Fishing Workshop is a 6 hour program developed to teach children between the ages of 7 and 13 the fundamentals of lake shore fishing. The program provides a balance in the recreational lives of our children, giving them an opportunity to be outdoors and away from computers, video games, and television. This program also provides the opportunity for young users to become supporters of parks for life. The reviews of this program have been extraordinary. In its first year, 275 students successfully participated; this year's participation is expected to be around 1,200.

## **Movies in the Park, County of San Diego Department of Parks & Recreation, California**

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation collaborated with seven city park and recreation agencies and the USS Midway Museum to organize the 2011 Summer Movies in the Park, a series of 42 outdoor movie events attracting over 16,000 participants in 20 different communities county wide. The events took place between June and September. Programs such as Movies in the Park promote parks as a place to congregate as a community, strengthen the community's image and create a shared sense of pride.



## **Park and Recreation Facility Class I Award**

### **Lighted Ski Trail, Washington County, Minnesota**

Washington County improved and expanded winter cross country skiing opportunities at Lake Elmo Park reserve by adding over 200 light fixtures to 5.4 miles of cross-country ski trails. A lighting manufacturer developed an innovative way of lighting the trails. Mounted on a five-foot long pole, the new energy efficient lights focus a LED beam of light down the directional trail making the trails bright with very little light spillage.



### **Red Mill Phase III, LaPorte County Parks, Indiana**

The third phase at Red Mill was a partnership between LaPorte County and the United States Army Corps of Engineers replacing a circa 1830's earthen dam that the department had inherited. This dam served its useful life and was beginning to fail. Construction began in 2010. The area below the dam was dewatered and 450 ft of new stream channel was created using native cobble, riffles, and waterfalls. The original earthen dam was demolished and the entire disturbed area was replanted with native vegetation. The project will preserve the current ecosystem by maintaining existing water levels, restoring native plant species, and improving fish habitat.



### **Enterprise South Nature Park, Hamilton County Parks & Recreation, Tennessee**

Celebrating its grand opening in December 16, 2010, the Enterprise South Nature Park is a 2,800 acre park offering 5.3 miles of walking/hiking trails, 10 miles of mountain bike trails, 6.9 miles of paved walking trails, and an ADA accessible woodland trail and picnic areas. Situated in the center of the City of Chattanooga and next to a major auto assembly plant, the Enterprise South Nature Park is able to meet the recreational needs of a broad and diverse population. Where else can such pristine and relatively undisturbed woodland be enjoyed within the heart of a thriving urban area?

## Park and Recreation Facility Class II Award

### **DuBois Park, Palm Beach County Parks & Recreation Department, Florida**

DuBois Park is one of Palm Beach County's most popular parks featuring opportunities for fishing, boating, swimming, snorkeling, picnicking, and more. Many ADA compliant features have been incorporated into its design and a water taxi will soon provide an alternative means of traveling to this beautiful waterfront destination. DuBois Park enjoys a rich, documented history. Artifactual evidence indicates that the site was occupied from at least 1000 BC. This extraordinary waterfront park is a tribute to the support of neighbors, taxpayers, and many agencies that share Palm Beach County's mission.



### **Lake Skinner Recreation Area Improvement Area, Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space District, California**

Lake Skinner is a flagship facility for Riverside County Parks, and is anchored by a man made lake that serves as a drinking water reservoir for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. The Lake Skinner Improvement Project includes a one-of-a-kind interactive and educational water play activity center, a new 5,000 seat amphitheater and a band shell hosting events. The Lake Skinner Recreation Area is now a state-of-the-art and sustainable facility that will continue to provide much needed recreation to this area of Riverside County.



### **Elm Creek Single Track Trail, Three Rivers Park District, Minnesota**

After nearly two years of planning and partnering for funding, the Elm Creek Single Track was under construction in the fall of 2010 and completed in June 2011. The 12.7 mile sustainable trail features three stacked loops including 2.2 miles with an easy rating, 8.8 miles rated more difficult and 2.4 miles rated most difficult. This trail has been very successful and has attracted over 5,600 visits in the first two months. This project is a great example of a project that blends community need with volunteer enthusiasm and funding support to develop a trail that attracts a crowd.

## Operational Facility Award

### **Turner Lake House, Newton County Recreation Commission, Georgia**

The Newton County Recreation Commission was able to purchase the four bedroom house in the 158 acre park on Turner Lake. This house had been scheduled to be demolished and replaced with a six story high rise, which would have negatively affected the scenic beauty of the area. The Recreation Commission was able to move five administrative offices into this building and is now able to better serve the citizens of Newton County.

## Historical/Cultural Facility Award

### **Exploration Gateway at Sippo Lake, Stark County Park District, Ohio**

Opened in 2007, the Exploration Gateway at Sippo Lake is a \$12 million dollar facility between Canton and Massillon, Ohio that is a center of nature, culture, and life-long learning. This project is a partnership between the Stark County Park District and the Stark County Library District. Park and library staff work together daily to demonstrate a commitment to education, the environment, community outreach, and stewardship of financial and natural resources.



### **Virginia Randolph Museum, Henrico County Division of Recreation & Parks, Virginia**

Originally constructed in 1937 as the home economics cottage for the Virginia Randolph Center, this National Historic Landmark was dedicated as a museum in honor of Virginia Randolph in 1974. Miss. Virginia Randolph, a Jeans Supervising Teacher for Henrico County, began her teaching career in 1892 and devoted over 50 years to educating and nurturing Henrico's African-American community. Work began on interior renovations in March of 2011 and the museum was reopened to the public in August of 2011. A new research center at the museum also allows visitors to learn about African-American history and Miss. Randolph's students.

## Environmental/Conservation Award

### **Poplar Creek Forest Preserve Restoration, Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois**

This conservation success tells the story of the restoration of the Poplar Creek Forest Preserve. Located in northeast Cook County Illinois, this mosaic of thriving habitats is the result of a long sustained, intense restoration effort fueled by a committed and diverse partnership. This successful project is the result of the remarkable collaboration between volunteers and forest preserve staff. Working together for more than 20 years, the volunteers gave more than 2000 hours annually to address short and long term conservation goals.



### **Parks Lake Management Program, Orange County Parks, California**

OC Parks has lakes at nine of its parks. Most were built decades ago long before current water quality best management practices. Previously the lakes were managed for short term results, but a broader approach was needed to address all issues. In 2011 OC Parks contracted with AquaTechnex to develop a more holistic approach addressing the long term health of the lakes, and surrounding plants and wildlife. OC Parks lakes have seen marked improvements and decreased phosphorous levels, successfully mitigated algae carrying capacity, and increased water clarity. Improving the appearance and quality of the lakes has benefited the parks and improved the quality of park experience.

## Removing Barriers Award

### **Rolling Hills County Park, Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation, Michigan**

As a component of its updated Master Plan, this project at Rolling Hills Park improved the accessibility of several existing park amenities and provides new universally accessible facilities and activities that afford recreational and nature interpretive opportunities. Construction was initiated in the fall of 2009 and the project was substantially completed by the spring of 2011. This project clearly illustrates how minor, and in some cases even low cost changes to design details of existing facilities, can vastly improve the accessibility and usability of parks and public spaces for all users.



### **Dos Picos Cabins, County of San Diego Department of Parks & Recreation, California**

Through a successful partnership between the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation and Cabins by the Lake, a non-profit organization which provides places for people with disabilities to enjoy a camping experience. Two accessible cabins were constructed at Dos Picos County Park in Ramona CA. The new cabins were constructed to establish an accessible destination in San Diego and to encourage greater participation in San Diego County parks, recreation facilities and programs by people of all abilities.

### **Play-for-All Ballfields, Shawnee County Parks & Recreation, Kansas**

It began with a parent's desire to see his son play baseball, and ended with the first ever play-for-all baseball diamond in the state of Kansas. Of the 105 counties in the state of Kansas, Shawnee County has the highest percentage of residents age 5-64 with one or more disabilities at 20.5%. Shawnee County Parks and Recreation saw the need, and through a fundraising effort that included the Kansas City Royals Charities Grants, a penny drive by Shawnee County residents and financial support from the City of Topeka, the dream of seeing children and adults with limited mobility play baseball was realized.



## Marketing Award

### **Website, Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space District, California**

In today's competitive markets, an agency's website is generally the face of the organization. It is essential that the website reflect that mission, vision, and values of the agency, as well as the products and services offered. In late 2010, Riverside County Park and Open-Space District launched a new website that reflected these goals. The redesign incorporates bold colors, a clean uncluttered home page, new image galleries, streaming videos, and links to social media. At a cost of less than \$4,000 the website provides real-time news, and updates made directly by staff. Since the launch the website has recorded more than 325,000 webpage hits and a 23% increase in new visitors.



### **Blog Outreach, Orange County Parks, California**

Orange County Parks leveraged local bloggers to augment traditional media outreach and replace paid advertising. OC Parks organized two event previews for about 20 bloggers. OC Parks invited the bloggers and their families to sneak previews and behind-the-scenes tours before the events. The bloggers posted a steady stream of enthusiastic tweets and wrote very positive posts publicizing their experiences and the upcoming events. They also received free park passes to encourage them to visit the parks often and blog about their experiences. Publicity for the Heritage Hill events totaled more than 10 million impressions valued at \$26,000. Many of the bloggers had never heard of Heritage Hill Historical Park and its events which helped increase awareness of this lesser-known facility. Attendance at the Zoo-tacular set an all-time OC Zoo record, beating the previous single-day record by 37%.



## Professional Fellow Award

### **Sue Black, Milwaukee County Department of Parks Recreation & Culture, Wisconsin**

Sue Black is a true example of an outstanding public official. She is passionate about parks and recreation and the communities she serves. Sue has garnered corporate support and philanthropic commitments securing millions of dollars in infrastructure investments, youth programming, and community events. Under Sue's leadership, Milwaukee County is being restored back to its glory days. Sue has a deep commitment to preserve the legacy of Milwaukee County Parks passed down from such leaders as Frederick Law Olmsted and Charles Whitnal. Milwaukee County Parks is proud to celebrate its 105th anniversary in 2012 and there is no doubt that Sue's impact will be recognized throughout the next 105 years.





## **John VonDeLinde, Anoka County Parks & Recreation, Minnesota**

John VonDeLinde has been a force for good within the Parks and Recreation field since he began his career in 1978. He is a Clifton French Award winner (MRPA lifetime achievement) in 2008. Since then John has continued his impressive push for the betterment of the parks systems of Minnesota. John not only coordinated the acquisition of the 2011 NACPRO award winning Cedar Creek Conservation Area but he has also helped to secure over \$30,000,000 in grant funding for Anoka County since his tenure as Director began. John is heavily involved in NACPRO and MRPA, always giving back to his profession.



## **Professional Lifetime Award**

### **John Elliott, Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois**

John Elliott, Education Manager for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, has been inspiring people of all ages to care about nature for 36 years. John, who retired in April 2012, has been with the Forest Preserve District since 1976. John's impact on the forest preserve education program has been profound. John infuses his enthusiasm for teaching into the fabric of the district and inspired staff to take new approaches to environmental education. John leaves behind a legacy of strong environmental education that thoughtfully and sensitively connects people of all backgrounds and ages to nature.

## **NACPRO President**

### **R.J. Cardin, Maricopa County, Arizona**

R.J. Cardin stepped into lead NACPRO during a time of transition; he has focused NACPRO on key strategies such as membership, communication, and legislation. He facilitated monthly board conference calls; membership has increased by 40% and our legislative priorities are now documented and tracked. R.J. has really made difference to NACPRO and the Board would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your leadership.



## **Award Sponsors**

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