



*Dedicated park stewardship for current and future generations*

**Superintendent's Annual Report 2009**



# mission

## 2009 Board of Commissioners

### President

Tom Nordyke, At Large

### Vice President

Mary Merrill Anderson, At Large

### Commissioners

Walt Dziedzic, District 1

Bob Fine, District 6

Carol Kummer, District 5

Tracy Nordstrom, District 4

Jon Olson, District 2

Scott Vreeland, District 3

Annie Young, At Large

### Superintendent

Jon Gurban

### Secretary to the Board

Don Siggelkow

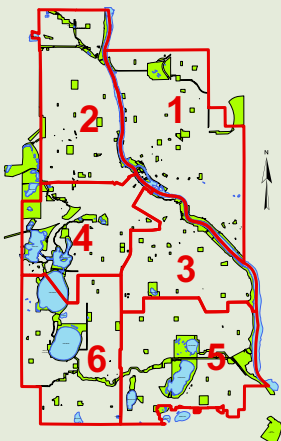
### Administrative Offices

2117 West River Road, Minneapolis, MN 55411

612-230-6400 *phone* 612-230-6500 *fax*

[www.MinneapolisParks.org](http://www.MinneapolisParks.org)

### Minneapolis Commissioner Districts



**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.**



(front, left-right) Annie Young, Bob Fine, Mary Merrill Anderson, Walt Dziedzic  
(back, left-right) Tracy Nordstrom, Scott Vreeland, Jon Olson, Carol Kummer, Tom Nordyke

# greetings from the Superintendent



The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has been dedicated to park stewardship since 1883, and this dedication was exemplified in 2009. We did an outstanding job protecting our resources, managing our finances and providing facilities, services and programs that meet the needs of residents and park users.

This report highlights the work that was done to accomplish goals outlined in our 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan. We achieved many successes in our efforts to protect our urban forests and waters, to provide recreation that inspires personal growth and a sense of community, to ensure our parks meet the diverse needs of our community, and to create safe places to play and recreate. We started construction on a new community cultural center and completed construction on several new playgrounds, picnic areas and trail segments. We actively sought resident feedback on recreation services, park improvements and infrastructure priorities. We also launched many new sustainability initiatives that will result in long-term benefits to the parks, the environment and the community.

Creating and sustaining park system resources for current and future generations is both rewarding and challenging. In 2009 the challenge was especially difficult due to losses in local government aid and a proposal by some City Council members to eliminate the independent Park Board and transfer responsibility of the park system to the City. The people of Minneapolis believed differently, as evidenced by the public outcry against the proposal. The groundswell of public support for the park system and the grassroots citizens' campaign to ensure the continued independence of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board were an honor to behold.

The public's high opinion of the park system was also evident in a 2009 survey commissioned by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. According to the survey, 99 percent of residents believe the park system is a valuable asset to the City, 97 percent believe the Park Board meet the needs of households, and 96 percent favorably rate the quality, overall appearance and maintenance of the park system.

Success can be measured by the satisfaction of those being served, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is committed to providing park users with quality park and recreation experiences.

  
Jon R. Gurban

## contents

- 1** Mission and Board of Commissioners
- 2** Greetings from the Superintendent
- 3** Urban forests, natural areas and waters that endure and captivate
- 5** Recreation that inspires personal growth, healthy lifestyles and a sense of community
- 7** Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs
- 10** A safe place to play, recreate, contemplate and celebrate
- 11** Values guide how Commissioners, staff and volunteers do their work
- 13** Organizational overviews
- 16** Foundation survey results
- 17** Awards and Fast Facts
- 18** 2009 Budget

# vision one

## Urban forests, natural areas and waters that endure and captivate



*Goal: Sound management techniques provide healthy, diverse and sustainable natural resources.*

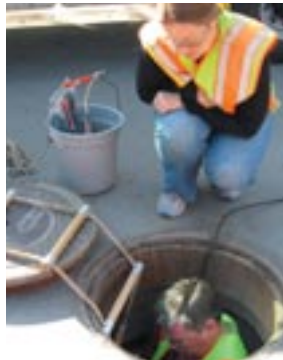
**EAB Initiatives** – With the discovery of the invasive insect species Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in St. Paul in May, further steps were taken in the park system’s EAB Preparedness Plan. Forestry staff continued working with the State’s Agriculture and Natural Resources departments to combat the spread of EAB and minimize its environmental, economic and aesthetic impact on the city’s urban forest by enacting new preventative measures. The Park Board ordinance concerning Dutch Elm Disease was amended to include all tree species and any harmful disease or pest. Public education efforts were increased with press releases, media coverage and key messages used in promotional publications. The proactive removal of damaged and defective ash trees began in autumn.

**Beach Closure Protocol** – The protocol for closing beaches due to high bacteria counts was reviewed and revised to stay current with State regulations. Each season, water quality staff monitor all 12 park system beaches for harmful bacteria. None of the beaches exceeded any bacteria safety threshold and none were closed in 2009.



**Diamond Lake** – Environmental Operations staff worked with the Friends of Diamond Lake neighborhood group to develop the Diamond Lake Management Plan, which will guide water quality improvement efforts at the lake and enhance its recreational uses.

**Storm Water Monitoring** – Working with the City’s Public Works department, Water Quality staff increased monitoring efforts for the City’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit. Two new monitoring sites were added to the ongoing NPDES study to better ascertain the effects of storm water runoff on the water quality of lakes, creeks and the river.



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

**Tornado Response** – In August, a tornado destroyed over 250 mature shade trees in south Minneapolis. Forestry crews responded by removing the debris quickly, grinding out tree stumps as soon as possible and working with property owners to replace lost trees with new varieties in an effort to ease the storm’s impact on the neighborhood. Over 400 trees will be planted to replace those lost to the storm.



**Urban Forest** – Forestry crews planted over 4,200 trees from over 40 different varieties on park lands and boulevards across the city; doubling the goal to increase by 10 percent the number of trees – 3,500 – that were planted in 2008. When adding or replacing boulevard trees, Forestry staff work with property owners to select trees that are appropriate for the location while promoting a diversity of tree species across the city.

**Tree Stump Removal** – Additional funding from the Hilton Trust allowed Forestry crews to remove all tree stumps that remained from tree-removal efforts prior to 2009. By year’s end, over 5,400 tree stumps were ground out.



**Forestry Equipment** – A log loader and trailers were purchased to improve tree maintenance efforts. Owning, rather than renting, the equipment allows greater flexibility in tree maintenance efforts, and ensures a quick emergency response for storm cleanup. The new equipment also makes tree planting and debris removal safer for work crews.



*Goal: Residents and visitors enjoy and understand the natural environment.*

**Planting for the Future** – All 49 recreation centers participated in Planting for the Future, a new program designed to involve community members in park tree-planting efforts. Through the program, each recreation center received a new tree during a community event held at the park.

**Arbor Day** – Waite Park and Waite Park Community School were among 13 locations in the country selected to participate in the Arbor Day Foundation’s national “Trees for Success” campaign. Forestry crews were joined by over 500 volunteers including community members and school students and staff in planting 100 trees.



**Monarch Festival** – Over 1,000 people attended the inaugural Monarch Festival held at the Lake Nokomis Naturescape Gardens. The event celebrated the Minnesota to Mexico migration of the state butterfly with music, dance, art, games, 5K Run and Kids’ Fun Run. Festival goers learned about native plants and monarch habitat, and tagged and released 100 butterflies to help study their migration patterns.

**Nature Play** – The new “Come Out and Play: Family Nature Club” program encouraged families to go outside and enjoy nature in a series of free, no-registration, no-obligation activities designed to help kids have fun exploring nature in urban parks.

**Canines for Clean Water** – A new summer outdoor film series, “Canines for Clean Water,” made ecological education fun for dog owners. Prior to screenings of dog-themed movies, dogs and their owners participated in activities designed to inform people of the negative impacts of animal waste on water quality.



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

**Powderhorn Rain Gardens** – Through a partnership with Metro Blooms, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and the City’s Public Works department, residents in the Central and Powderhorn Park neighborhoods were recruited to install rain gardens as part of a project to study the effects rain gardens would have on storm water runoff into Powderhorn Lake. Once the rain gardens are installed, water quality staff will monitor their impact on the lake.

**Teen Teamworks** – Supervisors for Teen Teamworks received water quality training, which they shared with their work crews. A second Green Team was added to the program to assist with water quality improvement efforts, including surveying properties for the Metro Blooms’ Powderhorn Rain Garden project. With funding from Minneapolis Employment and Training Programs, 20 youths were hired for two Garden Crews to maintain park garden areas throughout the city.

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

**Planet Purple** – Through a partnership with the Minnesota Vikings, a new tree-planting event, Planet Purple, was held at Bohanon Park and Jenny Lind School. Forestry crews were joined by over 600 volunteers including community members, Vikings players and personnel and school students and staff in planting 100 trees.



**Earth Day** – Over 3,000 volunteers removed over 30,000 pounds of trash at 41 locations across the city during the Earth Day Watershed Cleanup. Over 500 runners participated in the Minneapolis Recycle Run, which helped raise funds to benefit future cleanup events.

# vision two



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

*Goal: People play, learn, and develop a greater capacity to enjoy life.*

**Ideawerks** – As part of improvements made to the recording studio at Powderhorn Recreation Center, the Institute of Production and Recording opened a new program at the location, Ideawerks Indigenous Creative Academy. Funded by the Jackie Lee Robinson Foundation, Ideawerks provides a multi-media arts education to youth ages 12-18.

**Girls Golf** – The learning centers at Columbia and Hiawatha golf clubs added LPGA-USGA Girls Golf to the park system's First Tee of Minneapolis junior golf programs. The program teaches golf skills to girls ages 7-17 in a fun, supportive environment.

**Skill Building** – An AmeriCorps grant awarded to the Youthline program enabled a full-time volunteer to promote technology learning among economically challenged teens in 27 recreation center computer labs.

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

**Park Visits Increase** – The Metropolitan Council released regional park visit survey statistics for 2008. Visits to regional parks in Minneapolis increased over 15 percent from 2007, to an estimated 15.4 million visits. Six of the top seven most visited regional parks are in the Minneapolis park system. First on the list was the Chain of Lakes, with over 5.1 million park visits. After Como Park in St. Paul, the next most visited parks were: the Mississippi River Gorge (1.9 million includes St. Paul), Nokomis-Hiawatha (1.9 million), Central Mississippi Riverfront (1.6 million), Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail (1.5 million), and Minnehaha Park (1.3 million).

**DeLaSalle Field** – In October, DeLaSalle Field hosted the first park league youth football games played at the new athletic field located on Nicollet



Island. Many years in the making, the field represents a joint effort between the Park Board and DeLaSalle High School.

*Goal: People connect through parks and recreation.*

**"Green" Bike Tour** – Attracting over 3,700 riders, the Minneapolis Bike Tour instituted several environmentally friendly initiatives designed to make the annual event "green." Instead of giving away bottled water, tour riders were encouraged to bring bottles to refill with tap water. Compost bins were used to recycle food waste, and most promotional materials were available only online to reduce paper waste.



**Franklin Steele Square** – Closed for renovation since 2006, Franklin Steele Square celebrated a grand re-opening. Central to the park's redesign is a new splash pad, which uses water more efficiently than a wading pool. Other improvements at the park include two playground areas, an eight-table picnic shelter, picnic tables, benches, grills, and a restroom and utility building.



**Free Music and Movies** – Over 230 concerts and 65 movies were presented at free outdoor events in over 35 park locations across the city. The popular summertime entertainment was extended into October by the Vita.Mn sponsored Autumn Music and Movies series at the Lake Harriet Bandshell.

**Interpretive Signage** – Through a donation from First American Funds, new interpretive signs were added to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. The signs include a garden map, and information about Eloise Butler and the garden's three primary ecosystems – woodland, wetland, and prairie.





photo courtesy Emma Freeman



**Historic Markers** – Detailing notable chapters in the history of the park system, historic markers were installed at seven locations. Parks receiving markers were Beltrami, Farview, Lyndale Farmstead, Murphy Square, and Washburn Fair Oaks. Two markers were also placed honoring the Stevens House, one at its original central riverfront location where the city of Minneapolis was so named, and one at its current location in Minnehaha Park.

**Listening Vessel** – The new sculpture at Lake Hiawatha Park was dedicated at a community event in June. The large granite parabola encourages visitors to explore the park’s natural environment by capturing sounds from the lake and surrounding area and amplifying them for the listener’s enjoyment.



**Special Events Department** – To improve the coordination of large-scale events and season-long concert and film series, Special Events staff were reorganized into a new, combined department.

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

**Volunteer Participation** – Over 1,200 individuals made long-term commitments to volunteer for the park system by coaching youth athletics teams, instructing youth and adult classes and caring for gardens and green spaces through Adopt-a-Park agreements. Over 2,600 people from 64 corporate, school, and nonprofit and community groups contributed more than 10,500 hours of work to planting and weeding landscape beds, watering and mulching trees, clearing overgrown brush, picking up litter and removing graffiti. Events made



possible with volunteer assistance included the Minneapolis Bike Tour, Earth Day Watershed Cleanup, Monarch Festival, neighborhood festivals and holiday parties and much more.

**500 New Coaches** – A recruitment goal of 500 new volunteers to coach youth sports teams was surpassed. The volunteers filled new and vacant coaching positions, providing vital leadership and positive role models to youth participating in 11 sports, including 42 new sports teams throughout the city.



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

**Phillips Community** – Parks in the Phillips neighborhood were priorities for improved facilities, community leadership, and increased programming. In addition to the groundbreaking for the Community Cultural Center, East Phillips Park secured funding for sports field improvements, as did nearby Stewart Park. Work began on much-needed improvements at Phillips Park Community Center, home to Club Youthline.



Recreation staff and community members formed the Phillips Activity Council, whose efforts to engage youth in sports resulted in a 700 percent increase in youth sports league participation. Community partnerships launched a lacrosse program with Little Earth of United Tribes, Sunday soccer tournaments with Liga de Hispanic Baseball, a Phillips Field Day community event, Bicycle Ambassadors program, Somali after-school mentoring and a National Night Out event drawing over 500 residents.

**Somali Community** – Stewart Park hosted the inaugural Somali Community Summer Fair. The event initiated by the Somali Help Center offered fair goers a festive atmosphere to celebrate Somali culture and learn about community resources.

# vision three

## Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs



### *Goal: Parks shape an evolving city.*

**Luce Line Trail** – Construction was completed on the seasonal Luce Line regional bike trail section running through Theodore Wirth Park. The Luce Line provides bicycle commuters downtown access from the western suburbs, and recreational cyclists over 60 miles of smooth riding.



**Above the Falls** – Landscaping improvements were made along West River Road parklands from the Plymouth Ave. Bridge north to Ole Olson Park. Dozens of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs were planted to enhance the riverfront green space. Across the river, Sheridan Memorial Park benefited from shoreline stabilization, grading and landscaping efforts.

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

**East Phillips** – Construction began on the East Phillips Community Cultural Center with a groundbreaking ceremony in November. The new center culminates a park master plan dating to 1997; the center is anticipated to open in fall 2010.



**Lake Harriet Bandshell** – Through a partnership with People for Parks, the Lake Harriet Bandshell seating area was renovated with permeable pavers and restored benches featuring wood slats made of Forest Stewardship Council certified Mayan mahogany.

**Peace Bridge** – A new bridge was installed in the Peace Garden at Lyndale Park. The Peace Bridge, designed by Kinji Akagawa and Jerry Allan, features a zigzag walkway to elude evil spirits, and incorporates Brazilian mahogany, Minnesota granite and stones from Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**Miniature Golf** – The Grand Rounds Miniature Golf Course opened in Northeast Park. Along with the sports complex and the Jim Lupient Water Park, the new attraction enhances the regional appeal of a neighborhood park, expanding its ability to serve a broader community while generating increased revenue.

**New Playgrounds** – Matthews Park received new playground equipment with funding from Minneapolis Public Schools and Xccent Play, a regional recreation company that also donated playground equipment for Lake Nokomis' main beach and Lake Calhoun's north beach. New playground equipment was also installed at Morris Park.



**Kenny Park Tennis Courts** – With support from the Kenny Neighborhood Association and the United States Tennis Association Northern, the two tennis courts at Kenny Park were completely refurbished, primarily through grant funding.

**Columbia Golf Club** – Plans and funding were approved to replace a deteriorating, 40-year-old irrigation system at Columbia Golf Club. The new system will be more efficient, reducing maintenance costs, and allowing staff to tailor water usage based on course topography, weather and evaporation.

**Parkway Resurfacing** – Lake of the Isles Parkway was resurfaced for the first time in 30 years. Most of the parkway was paved with bituminous material; a section near the Kenilworth Bridge was paved with concrete to accommodate limited bus traffic.

**North Mississippi Park** – Renovation of North Mississippi Park was completed. Improvements include three new picnic shelters, LED lighting, redesigned parking lot with rain gardens and reinforced turf to manage storm water, and sandstone seating made from blocks salvaged from the Main Street Railroad Bridge.





**Lake Calhoun Parking Lot** – Work began on the parking lot on the south shore of Lake Calhoun to increase user safety and reduce environmental impacts. When completed in 2010, new features will include pervious paving and rain gardens to filter storm water runoff, a turnaround, and improved lighting and signage.

**Brownie Lake** – A canoe rack with 12 rental slots was installed at Brownie Lake. The new amenity is a first for the most rustic and secluded link in the Chain of Lakes.

**Minnehaha Park** – Shoreline stabilization efforts along Minnehaha Creek replaced or rebuilt WPA-era stone retaining walls and footings from Minnehaha Ave. to the Mississippi River. Creek-side seating was added and work continues on path renovation. The project was made possible through partnerships with the Minnesota Veterans Home, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

**Wabun Picnic Area** – Renovation of the Wabun Picnic Area’s Lower Glen was completed. Improvements include two new picnic shelters, maintenance building with restrooms that are open to the public year round, rerouted service road to improve traffic flow, new shared-use path, refurbished WPA-era picnic tables, sandstone seating areas and storm water treatments including pervious brick pavements, reinforced turf overflow parking and storm ponds.

**West River Parkway** – Walking and cycling trails along West River Parkway were repaved from the Franklin Ave. Bridge to Godfrey Parkway to improve trail usability. Trail enhancements include wider, smooth lanes and



separated bike and pedestrian trails where possible. New lighting improved visibility for motorists and trail users alike. Work continues in 2010 with new signage, drinking fountains, landscaping and other trail amenities.

*Goal: Through outreach and research, park and recreation services are relevant today and tomorrow.*

**Community Service Areas** – Neighborhood meetings were held to gather resident feedback on recreation services offered in the Near North and Upper Northeast Community Service Areas (CSA).

**Project Development** – Public open house meetings were held to discuss potential park improvements and gather community input. Among topics discussed were: renovation of Wirth Beach, replacing the Lake Hiawatha Park wading pool, design of the East Phillips Cultural Community Center, and improvements to Victory Memorial Parkway and Powderhorn Park. Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) were created to gain public input on significant projects. One CAC made recommendations on potential changes to concession operations at Lake Harriet; another CAC began reviewing plans to renovate Boom Island and the B.F. Nelson Park site.



**Community Engagement** – Surveys were conducted, and multiple public open house meetings were held to gain community input on programming and infrastructure priorities for court sports, field sports, winter recreation, and pedestrian and cycling trails.

**Budget Priorities** – Public input was sought to establish budget priorities for 2010 through an online survey, and at monthly listening sessions that were held at Board of Commissioner meetings in six neighborhood parks.



**Goal: Focused land management supports current and future generations.**

**Building Sale** – The sale of surplus property, the 201 building at Fort Snelling Park, was completed. Transaction proceeds will be used toward debt service obligations incurred developing the Neiman Sports Complex.

**Land Donation** – Development of Sheridan Memorial Park was furthered by the donation of two parcels of land from the family of Dr. Frank Galka. The donated land fell within the boundaries of the burgeoning riverside park.

**Parks and Schools** – Working with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), staff reviewed several property locations used jointly by MPS and the Park Board to clarify legal boundaries. To best meet the service needs of both organizations, the review resulted in land exchanges in excess of 723,000 square feet involving 10 locations.

**Goal: Financially independent and sustainable parks prosper.**

**Park Dedication** – State statute was modified in 2006 to allow the City of Minneapolis and the Park Board to enact a Park Dedication Ordinance. This would provide much-needed land, or money in lieu of land, for acquisition, rehabilitation and new development for neighborhood and community parks. Efforts continue to finalize an ordinance with the City. The Park Board has approved a version, followed by a City version to which the Park Board proposed other changes. However, the ordinances are not the same, and since they must have identical language, efforts continue to resolve differences.

**Bryant Ave. Bridge** – Major funding was approved by the Metropolitan Council and secured via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to rehabilitate the Bryant Ave. pedestrian bridge across Minnehaha Creek, which was closed in 2008 for safety reasons. Work will begin in 2010.

**Cress Donation** – The Fred W. Cress estate donated \$35,000 toward funding the 2009 concert series at the Lake Harriet Bandshell.



**Neighborhood Revitalization Program Funding** – Waite Park Community Council funded supervision for outdoor recreation and a new park sign at Waite Park. Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group funded recreation



center upgrades, programming, new lighting and field fencing at McRae Park. Calhoun Area Residents Action Group funded youth outdoor recreation and education programs at Bryant Square Park. Victory

Neighborhood Association funded extended summer hours at Victory Park, and East Phillips Improvement Coalition helped fund construction of the Community Cultural Center at East Phillips Park.

**Loring Community Arts Center** – To improve rental accommodations and increase potential revenue opportunities at Loring Community Arts Center, catering services agreements and Park Board ordinance PB2-17 regarding intoxicating liquor were amended to include the popular, downtown venue.



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

**Activities Guide** – The Cool Activities Guide was published to inform park goers of autumn and winter activities and events offered throughout the park system. Printed publications were available at recreation centers and libraries citywide; an electronic version was available online.



# vision four

## A safe place to play, recreate, contemplate, and celebrate



### *Goal: Positive recreation experiences and welcoming parks prevent crime.*

**Gang Prevention** – The Youthline Outreach Mentorship Program was awarded a three-year federal grant for the Intensive Gang Prevention Youth Mentoring project from the United States Department of Justice. The new mentoring program will develop long-term relationships between youth and positive adult role models in four north Minneapolis neighborhoods.



**Youth Violence Prevention** – Youthline staff collaborated with the City's Department of Health and Family Services to address the Blueprint for Action: Youth

Violence Prevention project. In addition to offering extended service hours and programming for teens during summer months, Youthline piloted the StreetReach program, which targets additional activities, resources and mentors toward youth exhibiting signs of at-risk behavior for violence. Youthline also partnered with the City on its Juvenile Diversion Program to provide after-school activities, mentoring and community services for first-time juvenile offenders.

### *Goal: Residents, park visitors and staff make safe choices in the parks.*

**Trail Safety** – Park Police hosted "Safety on the Trails," a public program at Lyndale Farmstead Park. Officers offered safety tips to program attendees and talked with park visitors about their safety concerns in park facilities.

**Influenza Preparedness** – Staff were trained to manage effects of an H1N1 influenza outbreak and to address concerns of park visitors. Information about H1N1 and other influenza-like illnesses was posted on the MPRB Website and made available at recreation centers.

**Northside Bike Fest** – The inaugural Northside Bike Fest was held at Webber Park to promote bicycle safety among youth cyclists. Youth attending the event received free bike tune-ups and maintenance tips, and participated in fun events encouraging safe riding techniques.



### *Goal: Intervention and communication reduce safety concerns.*

**Plank Road** – The Plank Road section of West River Parkway was closed in response to community concerns. The deteriorating condition of the wooden road posed safety problems for both motorists and trail users. Plans to reopen the road are contingent upon funding for improvements.

### *Goal: Parks are safe and welcoming by design.*

**Victory Memorial Parkway** – Eight intersections along Victory Memorial Parkway were vacated to enhance the usability of parkway trails, and to improve safety for both motorists and trail users. Improvements included newly paved trail sections, landscaping, enhanced lighting and the addition of three fire hydrants along the parkway.



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

**East Cedar Beach** – Funding was secured for extra Park Police patrols of the East Cedar Beach area through an agreement with the Kenwood Isles Area Association. Community members allocated Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds to extend the patrols through 2011.



# guide how commissioners, staff, and volunteers do their work

## sustainability

**Sustainability 2013** – In an effort to continue meeting the needs of current and future generations of park users, staff worked with consultants from GreenMark to assess organizational policies and practices as they relate to park system amenities and services. With environmental, economic and



equitability considerations in mind, GreenMark proposed a strategic outline, Sustainability 2013, for implementing and enhancing sustainable practices throughout the park system. Approved by the Board, Sustainability 2013 will clearly express what sustainability means for the park system; apply park system assets to sustainability issues; create projects and relationships to deliver superior services that enhance the

quality of life for residents and park users; and communicate park system initiatives to key audiences and stakeholders.

**Energy Efficiency** – Implementation of a study to improve the energy efficiency of park facilities began. Working with McKinstry Inc, a preliminary energy audit was conducted at five recreation centers. Plumbing, electrical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems were evaluated; each building's utility consumption records were analyzed, and a facility improvement matrix was created to outline proposed energy efficiency improvement measures. With Board approval in 2010, work will continue with the installation and evaluation phases of the project.

**Longfellow Gardens** – The exclusive use of organic gardening methods was implemented at Longfellow Gardens. Organic-only practices were used in all aspects of garden and turf management at the site to promote healthy soil and plants. The formal garden is a popular destination and the location provided an excellent public showcase for successful, sustainable gardening techniques.



**Web-based Thermostats** – After successful pilot programs, installation of web-based programmable thermostats to control heating and cooling of park buildings continued in 2009. Recreation centers at Corcoran, Creekview, Sibley, Stewart, Waite and Whittier benefited from the new technology with lowered energy costs and labor-saving programming and troubleshooting via the Internet. The new thermostats are now installed in 14 recreation centers; additional installations will occur in 2010.

**Improved Composting** – A pilot composting project was launched to reuse organic material. Milfoil and plant and tree debris were screened of impurities and cooked in the sun to produce a viable compost product. Over 3,500 cubic yards of healthy soil was reclaimed by the process and used as soil amendments in landscaping projects throughout the park system.



**Greening Technology** – Information and Technology Services upgraded 150 workstations with Energy Star compliant computers and monitors, which consume 75 percent less energy than older models. Future purchases will also meet Energy Star requirements. Replaced monitors were donated to PCs for People, a nonprofit organization that refurbishes computer equipment and provides computers to people with limited access to technology due to social, physical or economic circumstances.



## responsiveness and innovation

**Programmable Locks** – New programmable door locks were installed on rental rooms at Wabun Picnic Area and restrooms at Wabun and the Minnehaha Pavilion. The locks ensured efficient key card access to the rental rooms during permitted events and automatic opening and closing of the public restrooms during park hours. This use of technology resulted in better customer service and less use of staff resources.



## *visionary leadership*

**Budget Balancing Strategies** – The Park Board developed a proactive 2009 budget that addressed serious economic challenges. The Park Board aggressively monitored and managed the budget throughout the year. By developing effective budget strategies, planning for potential reductions to Local Government Aid (LGA) funds, and implementing a hiring pause, the Park Board effectively controlled its budget while delivering quality services and programs to constituents and park visitors.

Efforts were made to reduce spending in all areas of the organization and at year end the Park Board exceeded expectations for expenditure savings. The Park Board maintained family-friendly pricing, kept buildings open and major programming intact, employed over 350 youth, and provided safe parks.

Throughout the year, many initiatives were successfully implemented to diversify and grow revenue. The Park Board vigorously pursued sponsorships and grants, increased its enterprise operating income by 8.2 percent, expanded its event offerings, and enhanced its permitting process to increase revenue.

**NRPA Congress Planning** – Planning began for the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Congress to be held in Minneapolis in October 2010. The Park Board is working in partnership with the Minnesota Park and Recreation Association and representatives from more than 55 local government agencies and companies to host an estimated 4,000-6,000 park and recreational professionals from throughout the country. The five-day NRPA Congress will showcase the park and recreation facility, service and leadership initiatives of Minneapolis, the metro area and state.



## *independence and focus*

**Public Supports Independent Park Board** – In January, several City Council members proposed amendments to the City Charter to eliminate the independent Park Board and Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET), making the Park Board a department of the City and transferring the authorities and responsibilities of the BET to the City Council. This attempt to usurp the Park Board and assume ownership of all parklands was the latest in a long history of such efforts, which not only predate the inception of the Park Board but necessitated its creation through the citizen-approved Park Act of 1883.

The City Charter Commission held public meetings in April and May to gauge citizen interest in the proposed changes. The public outcry against the amendments was loud, clear and cited by the Commission in their June decision to deny the Park Board referendum; however, the Commission did approve the BET referendum and it was placed on the November ballot.

In July, faced with the possible BET dissolution and the loss of Park Board control of its finances that would accompany it, the Park Board proposed a resolution to amend the City Charter to grant the Park Board “all powers and rights of a governmental unit as determined by the State Legislature.” The Mayor’s veto of the resolution was overridden by the Park Board.

Throughout the summer, a grassroots campaign led by Citizens for Independent Parks (CFIP) launched a petition drive to place the independent Park Board referendum on the ballot. The CFIP campaign, supported by two previous City Mayors, collected 17,086 signatures, surpassing the 10,449 required for Charter Commission consideration. The Commission forwarded the referendum to the City Council with a recommendation that they reject it, which they did on August 28, calling the referendum unconstitutional.

The Council vote sparked a lawsuit filed by CFIP to place the referendum on the ballot before the September 11 deadline to do so. With less than two weeks to hear the case, a Hennepin County District Court judge ruled in favor of the City. There being no time to appeal the decision, the referendum to eliminate the BET was the only one placed on the November ballot. It was soundly defeated. The public’s support of an independent Park Board dedicated to the stewardship of the park system remains as strong today as it was when people were allowed to vote for its establishment in 1883.





# organizational overviews

## administration

Administration provides organizational leadership, management and support to Park Board staff and departments, and assists with development and implementation of Park Board policies.

## community recreation services

Community Recreation Services offers recreational programming that promotes the health and well-being of people of all ages. Year round, adults, youths and people with disabilities participate in athletic leagues offered in over 20 sports. In 2009, nearly 600 youth sports teams attracted over 8,000 participants; and over 1,900 adult sports teams attracted nearly 32,000 participants. Staff also oversee the rental of athletic facilities; in 2009 over 6,000 rental permits were issued, generating \$385,000.



The Recreation Plus program offers families access to quality, affordable school-age childcare that emphasizes activity, creativity and community. Programs are offered in 16 neighborhood centers across the city with childcare available during the school year both before and after school hours in addition to the summer months.

The Youthline Outreach Mentorship Program gets youth ages 12-16 involved in activities that foster their development of leadership skills. The program allows youth to explore new interests and budding talents under the guidance of supportive mentors. Positive recreational activities are designed to engage youth in their community and to encourage their sense of belonging. In 2009, Youthline programs were offered in 29 locations across the city.

The Teen Teamworks youth education and paid-employment program offers youth ages 14-18 supervised on-the-job training performing basic grounds maintenance. Weekly educational and life skill sessions are taught by certified teachers. In 2009, Teen Teamworks employed 343 youth.



The Department of Volunteers and Community Partnerships is responsible for the recruitment, screening, placement, retention and recognition of volunteers for both long-term and one-time commitments. The Volunteer Department also works with

20 Adopt-a-Park groups and organizes service projects for area corporations, nonprofits and schools groups.

## customer service

Customer Service is the one-stop-shop for park users and staff, providing assistance to walk-up, phone and Internet customers. Staff manage the administrative ticket program and process permits for off-leash recreation areas, parking, picnics, weddings, parkway use, photography, filming and facility use. Staff also assist with participant registration for league sports and other activities.

In 2009, Customer Service processed over 12,000 administrative tickets, and more than 8,700 processed permits, including 6,000 annual parking passes, 643 group picnics, 121 weddings, 145 receptions, 700 off-leash recreation area permits, 368 sailboat buoys, 436 canoe racks, over 140 commercial filming and photography permits and over 160 special parkway uses, generating \$1.6 million dollars in revenue.

## data practices and records management

Data Practices and Records Management provides management, support and coordination of all data practice requests and system-wide record management efforts. In 2009, staff processed over 190 data practices requests from the public. Staff also provide support at Park Board meetings, preparing agendas, taking meeting minutes and offering technical support for Board presentations and televised broadcasts.

## district services

District Services provides maintenance, planning and recreation services for communities within the park system's three service districts: Lakes, Minnehaha and River. District teams work together and provide an integrated approach in meeting the needs of neighborhood residents.



Maintenance staff are responsible for the upkeep of park buildings, grounds and amenities. They perform daily and seasonal duties that include cleaning buildings, planting gardens, clearing trails and maintaining athletic facilities.

Planning staff ensure community park and recreation needs are met by working with community members to ascertain the relevance of park amenities offered in their district and making improvements as possible.

Recreation staff manage 49 neighborhood community and recreation centers across the city, providing unique programming and special events that meet the recreational needs of their service area.



## *environmental and field services*

Environmental and Field Services supports three unique yet integrated environmental service functions and provides vocational expertise for skilled trades. Environmental Education staff offer engaging programs that teach people of all ages about the complexity and importance of natural environments and stewardship of natural resources.

Water Quality staff monitor, manage, and protect the water quality of city lakes, creeks and storm water runoff, and develop annual water quality reports. Additionally, staff provide leadership in ongoing stewardship and regulatory forums toward compliance with state and federal law and in the development of water quality improvement projects.



Natural Resources staff use sustainable practices to care for over 400 acres of unique ecosystems including native prairies and woodlands, shorelines and wetlands throughout the park system.



Field Services provides skilled trades staff to maintain park properties. The Carpentry Shop repairs, remodels and maintains park buildings and properties. The Cement Shop provides concrete and masonry services including paving,

bricklaying, and stone and tile setting. The Electrical Shop installs, maintains and repairs facility electrical systems. The Paint Shop provides interior and exterior painting services and graffiti removal. The Plumbing Shop installs, maintains and repairs facility plumbing and heating and air conditioning systems. Equipment Services performs fleet management including the purchase, maintenance and operation of vehicles and other heavy equipment.

## *finance*

Finance provides general accounting, purchasing coordination, accounts payable, accounts receivable, capital project accounting, financial reporting and audit support, risk management, financial analysis, budget development and budget monitoring services. The Finance department is included in and utilizes the City of Minneapolis financial system for all finance related transactions.

## *forestry*

Forestry is responsible for the care of all trees on parklands and on boulevards along more than 1,000 miles of city streets. Forestry staff plant, prune and remove trees as needed, and monitor for invasive insects and tree diseases in order to mitigate their harmful effects on the urban forest.

Fallen trees and tree debris created by storms and other causes are removed to clear roadways and eliminate hazards. Forestry staff promote the many benefits of trees through tree-planting events and distribution of educational materials to property owners when their boulevards receive new trees.

## *human resources*

Human Resources manages collective bargaining negotiations and contract interpretation, provides support and training for supervisors in all areas of personnel management, and manages the coordination of the workers compensation program in addition to conducting recruitment, staffing, and classification efforts for MPRB positions. Human Resources staff assure that all regulatory requirements in the Human Resources area are complied with, and coordinate all employee misconduct investigations.

In 2009, the Park Board sought and received delegation of authority from the Civil Service Commission to manage its own Human Resources functions. This has resulted in greater efficiencies and a faster process.

## *information technology services*

Information Technology Services provides maintenance of network infrastructure, management and support of workstations, printers and copiers, phone systems, online registration coordination and technical support of the Park Board Web site, business process review and application support and development services. Staff provide technology training to employees and coordinate technology services with the City of Minneapolis by using some City applications, including human resources, financial system and public safety software.



In 2009, a collaborative review was conducted with the City of Minneapolis to evaluate whether any cost saving could result from contracting out Park Board Information Technology functions to the vendor used by the City. It was determined that by using the City vendor, costs would increase 50 percent for the same level of services currently provided internally by Park Board staff.



## park safety and security

The Park Police Department is responsible for the safety and security of park visitors and staff. Park Police officers and agents patrol all park properties, enforcing all federal, state, city and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board laws and ordinances. Park Police also work with other law enforcement agencies and public prosecutors in the investigation and prosecution of criminal matters.

Park Police conduct background screenings of all potential Park Board employees, and annual criminal checks of employees. Volunteers working in positions of trust are also subject to these same criminal background checks.



Crime prevention and safety education efforts include community meetings, public awareness campaigns and Safety Camp, an annual youth program where police officers and firefighters teach personal and social safety skills in a fun and friendly environment.

## planning and project management

Planning and Project Management is responsible for applying land management practices consistent with the Park Board's mission and policies. It programs, designs and constructs capital improvements to regional and neighborhood parks; conducts community research and development for projects and programs; leads comprehensive planning; and coordinates organization-wide implementation and work plan development and system-wide sustainability initiatives. Planning applies for and receives millions of dollars annually from local, regional, state and federal funding sources to fund capital improvements, and is responsible for several key initiatives such as government relations and managing the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.



## public information and marketing

Public Information and Marketing manages communications initiatives for the organization, including news releases, media relations, district publications, photography, Web site maintenance and enhancements, special promotions development, special project writing support, and consultation with staff relating to public relations issues. In 2009, the department distributed more than 300 news releases and maintained up-to-date content on almost 1,500 Web pages.

## special services

Special Services oversees the operation of revenue-generating facilities and related programming and coordinates large-scale and citywide special events at park locations. Each year a portion of net profit derived from enterprise and small business operations is used for general fund support and program investment. In 2009, fund transfers included \$295,000 to the General Fund and \$1.1 million to pay debt service for the Neiman Sports Complex.

Regional recreational facilities that generate revenue include five 18-hole and two 9-hole golf courses, three golf learning centers with driving ranges, two water parks, two indoor ice arenas, two sports complexes, a miniature golf course, and a winter recreation area. Additional revenue at some of these facilities is generated through food services, instructional programming and equipment rental. Parking systems generate revenue through permits, meters and pay lots.



Concession operations including food service and boat and bike rentals are maintained through contracted vendors at four regional parks. Park facilities generate rental revenue from public events including art fairs, cultural gatherings and fundraisers. Major events coordinated by division staff include the Earth Day Watershed Cleanup, Minneapolis Recycle Run, Red White and Boom 4th of July Celebration, Minneapolis Bike Tour, and the summer-long series of free outdoor movies and music in the parks.

# Success is measured by the satisfaction of those served *the people have spoken*

A landmark survey commissioned by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation illustrates how important the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is to city residents and its pivotal role in the city's quality of life. Decision Resources Ltd. conducted the survey by querying people about their perceptions of the park system.

According to Decision Resources, there is an overwhelming public perception that the park system is the "jewel in the crown" of the city and the current governance structure of the Park Board should be preserved. The survey results were the most positive seen by the company in any polling they have conducted, either locally or nationally. They called the survey results a sweeping mandate for maintaining an independent Park Board.

Public perceptions were overwhelmingly positive about park system facilities and services, as well as the roles parks play in their community and how well parks meet the needs of households.

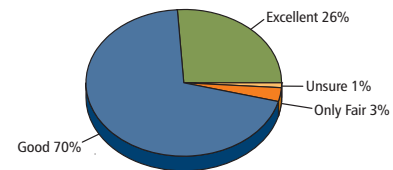
## Notable survey results include:

- 99 percent of residents see the parks and lakes as a unique and valuable asset for the city.
- 99 percent of residents think the park system plays an important role in serving the public by offering free or low-cost recreational facilities and activities.
- 96 percent of residents favorably rate the quality, overall appearance and maintenance of the park system.
- 96 percent of residents think the parks and lakes play a key role in the physical health and wellness of city residents.
- 97 percent of residents report existing parks and facilities meet the needs of households.
- 94 percent of residents say the park system contributes to the economy by increasing the value of properties near parks.
- 75 percent favor maintaining the current park system governance structure.
- 48 percent of residents say there is nothing they dislike about the parks. In comparison, other least-liked issues (too crowded, unsafe, lack of parking, high fees and maintenance) received marks of 6 percent or lower.

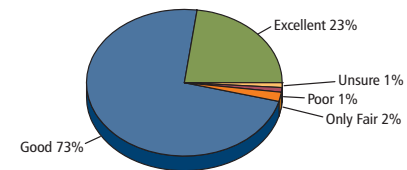
Decision Resources cited an average score for resident perceptions was 97 percent favorable. According to the company, such consistent positive results differentiate the Minneapolis park system from any other system in the state.

For more details about the Minneapolis Parks Foundation's Executive Summary Findings, visit [www.minneapolisparcs.org](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org) and select "About MPRB."

## Ratings of Minneapolis Park System

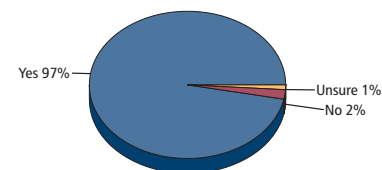


## Quality of Minneapolis Park System

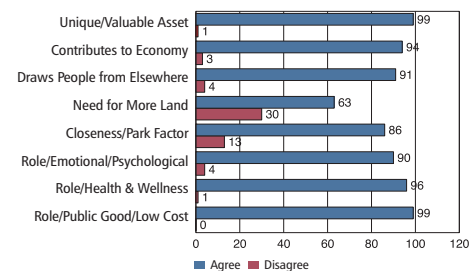


## Overall Appearance and Maintenance of Parks

## Meet Needs of Household



## Perceptions of the Park System



2009 Minneapolis Parks Foundation Study data courtesy Decision Resources, Ltd.

# fast facts

- 1883** Year MPRB established
- 15.4 million** Estimated regional park visits
- 5 million** Estimated neighborhood park visits
- 182** Park properties
- 6,732** Acres of parkland and water
- 200,000** Boulevard trees
- 49** Recreation centers
- 27** Computer labs open to the public
- 6** Skate parks
- 215** Playgrounds
- 60** Wading pools
- 2** Water parks
- 12** Authorized beaches
- 7** Fishing piers
- 6** Boat launches
- 4** Canoe launches
- 345** Sailboat buoys
- 438** Canoe/kayak racks
- 4** Outdoor performance stages
- 55** Miles of parkways
- 43** Miles of Grand Rounds walking paths
- 43** Miles of Grand Rounds biking paths
- 5** Dog off-leash recreation areas
- 12** Gardens
- 2** Bird sanctuaries
- 7** Golf courses
- 3** Golf driving ranges
- 1** Winter recreation area
- 2** Indoor ice arenas
- 48** Outdoor ice rinks
- 396** Multipurpose sports fields

# 2009 awards



**Celebration Award** – presented by Arbor Day Foundation for the 2008 Arbor Day celebration, “125 Trees for 125 Years,” which best represented the spirit of Arbor Day.

**Guardian of the Flame Award** – presented by Special Olympics Minnesota to Minneapolis Park Police for excellence in fundraising via the 2008 Law Enforcement Torch Run campaign.

**O.D. Gay Award** – presented by Meet Minneapolis for Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s role in facilitating the 2008 Republican National Convention.

**Certificate of Recognition** – presented by Central Weed and Seed to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in celebration and appreciation for the exceptional service to the people of the Central Neighborhood, and extraordinary partnership in the promise of the Central Weed and Seed Initiative.

**Good Luck and Godspeed Award** – announced by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, the Minneapolis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Preserve Minneapolis for plans to develop Bluff Street Park, reinventing the landscape to enhance the city’s heritage and historic character while fostering community knowledge of preservation.

**Unbuilt Works Award** – presented by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Landscape Architects for the design of B.F. Nelson Park, which fulfills the program needs of a regional park while respecting neighborhood wishes for a sustainable, natural environment.

**Excellence in Programming Award** – presented by the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association for outstanding achievement in programming: Northside Fundamental Baseball Program’s use of Negro Baseball League history and themes in youth baseball instruction.

**Excellence in Parks and Facilities Award** – presented by the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association for outstanding achievement in parks and facilities: Improvements at Wabun Picnic Area’s Upper Glen, and the partnerships made in project funding and design.

**10 Great Public Spaces for 2009 Award** – presented by the American Planning Association for the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway system exemplifying the role planners and planning play in creating communities of lasting value.

**Best Community Garden Award** – announced by Metro Blooms to Longfellow Gardens for floral displays that beautify the city using gardening methods that help restore the environment.

# 2009 budget



## condensed financial report

for the year ended December 31, 2009

### Revenues

Property Taxes	\$ 43,497,476
Enterprise	14,000,798
Local Government Aid	9,469,497
Other Revenue	4,794,099
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 71,761,870</b>

### Expenditures

District Recreation and Maintenance	\$ 23,701,652
Enterprise	12,908,271
Forestry	9,831,861
Park Police	5,148,115
Community Recreation and Volunteer Services	3,270,103
Skilled Trades	3,025,469
Capital Projects	1,493,641
Finance and Personnel	1,485,919
City Management Fee, Workers Comp and Other	1,412,538
Environmental Operations	1,306,500
Planning and Project Management	1,243,661
Aquatics and Neiman Complex	1,058,146
Summer Youth Employment – Teen Teamworks	1,000,635
Public Information, Customer Service and Data Practices	607,344
Field Services	538,643
Board of Commissioners	497,797
Administration	388,336
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 68,918,631</b>

For more details about the 2009 budget, visit [www.minneapolisparcs.org](http://www.minneapolisparcs.org), select "About MPRB," then select "Park Board Budget."





2117 West River Road  
Minneapolis, MN 55411

612-230-6400 *phone*

612-230-6500 *fax*

[www.MinneapolisParks.org](http://www.MinneapolisParks.org)