

A Renewed Vision



Annual Report FY 2011



Howard County
RECREATION & PARKS

Welcome



Ken Ulman
County Executive

I'm pleased to present the Department of Recreation and Parks' Annual Report for 2011. This has been a busy year for the Department's staff. In addition to maintaining nearly 9,000 acres of parkland and open space offering 5,600 leisure programs and activities, they hosted the County's 4th of July Celebration, Wine in the Woods, the Holiday Mart, summer concerts, runs, walks, tournaments and countless other community events. This year we also had a lot to celebrate as we opened the North Laurel Community Center and the Robinson Nature Center.

The North Laurel Community Center is shared by the Departments of Recreation and Parks, Citizen Services, Health and Police. It features a 50+ Center, Senior Center Plus program, health clinic, police satellite office, fitness center, dance and aerobics studio, computer room, gymnasium and so much more.

On September 10, we also opened the Robinson Nature Center, which is situated on 18 acres of land adjacent to the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area. The Center features interactive exhibits, displays and a 50-seat NatureSphere, a state-of-the-art digital planetarium that really is out of this world!

I want to thank Director John Byrd and his dedicated staff for making 2011 another great year for Howard County's Department of Recreation and Parks.

Stay active!



John R. Byrd, Director
Recreation & Parks

This past year, we continued our efforts toward a more sustainable operation. An interdepartmental committee was formed to promote sustainable practices and reinforce the idea of conserving resources. The whole department was involved in a process to update our Mission Statement, our Vision and to establish a set of Core Values that are the basis for our service delivery. Due to the dedication and commitment of the entire staff, we have emerged from a difficult year of adjustment and are prepared to continue to provide the high quality leisure services Howard County residents deserve and have come to expect.

I'd like to thank Howard County Executive Ken Ulman, all of our colleagues in the County Administration, and the Howard County citizens for their support and confidence in Recreation and Parks.

As you read this report, please keep in mind we appreciate your feedback on any aspect of our operations and suggestions to improve.

Our Staff

Staff: We have 172 full-time staff members; 115 part-time, benefitted staff members; and 363 contingent staff members. There are 11 Certified Park and Recreation Professionals, 11 American Sport Education Program-Certified staff members, 2 Certified Arborists, 2 Registered Landscape Architects, and 2 Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists.

Recreation & Parks Advisory Board Members: Dr. Joel Goodman (Chair), Mr. Lowell Adams (Vice Chair), Dr. Janet Siddiqui, Mr. Chuck Parvis, Ms. Joanne Kiebler, Ms. Sylvia Ramsey, Mr. Dave Grabowski, Mr. Daniel Tracy, Mr. John R. Byrd (Executive Secretary), and Ms. Danielle Ellis (Student Representative).

Volunteers: 4,674 volunteers donated 100,062 hours this fiscal year. This is equivalent to 48 full-time staff members, saving the County about \$1.5 million.

Goals

The following goals were announced and achieved in FY '11:

- Opened and established the North Laurel Community Center.
- Completed construction of the James and Anne Robinson Nature Center.
- Coordinated the County's new Technology Programs titled "Systems Applications and Products (SAP) Accounting System" and "ActiveNet Registration System."
- Managed consultant activities to achieve compliance with the Troy Regional Park Master Plan.
- Created a Department depreciation/renovation maintenance schedule for all park sites, recreation facilities, and maintenance items.
- Started construction on Blandair Regional Park, Phase I.
- Designed a plan for final submittal of the self-assessment document to the National Recreation and Parks Association's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). This is for the Department's ten-year reaccreditation.

The following goals were announced for FY '12:

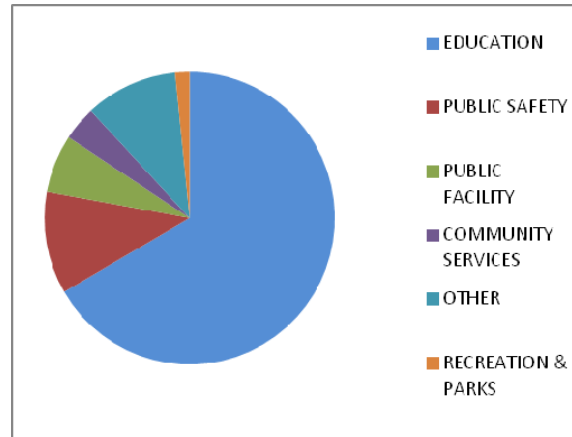
- Increase the number of Howard County residents participating in Department of Recreation and Parks programs, events, and offerings.
- Open and provide program development for the Robinson Nature Center so as to create a center for environmental education in the County.
- In partnership with MORE (Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts), continue the construction of a bicycle Skills Park at Rockburn Park that began in the Fall of 2011.
- Improve staff competency level with therapeutic programs by providing in-house continuing education units (CEUs) for the areas of behavior management and inclusion supports.
- Complete an inventory of Park Operations and Facilities' equipment zone by zone. This inventory will help the Department plan more successfully for future changes in operational needs and provide accountability.
- Complete construction of the Blandair Regional Park, Phase I.
- Complete a plan for final submittal of the CAPRA self-assessment document.



Recreation and Parks received 1.6% of the total County budget in FY '11.

Total General Fund Budget: **\$824,375,862**

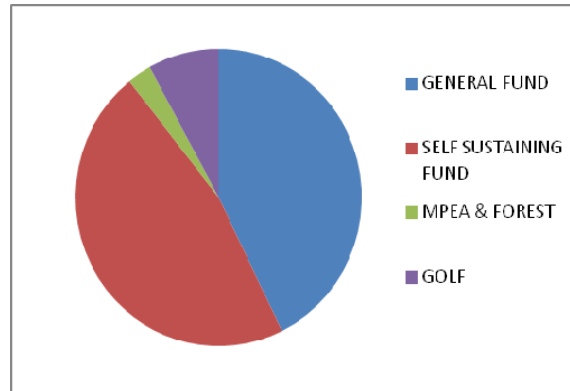
Education	66.6%
Public Safety	11.3%
Public Facilities	6.4%
Community Services	3.8%
Other	10.3%
Recreation and Parks	1.6%



Our Operating Budget is multi-funded. Program fees, special events, and grants are the majority sources and are not tax supported.

Total Operating Budget: **\$30,603,210**

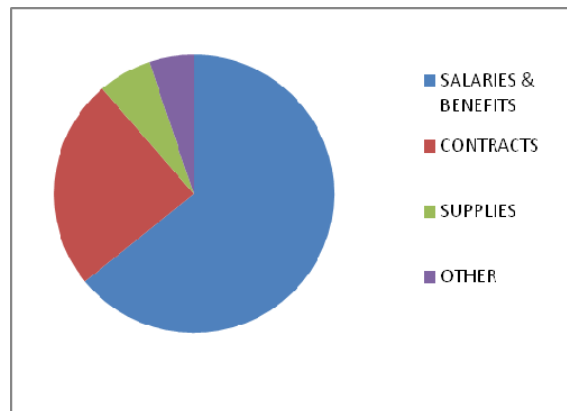
General Fund	42.7%
Self Sustaining Fund	46.6%
MPEA*/Forest Mitigation	2.7%
Golf	8.0%



*Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

Total Expenses: **\$26,088,461**

Salaries and Benefits	64.2%
Contracts	24.5%
Supplies	6.2%
Other	5.1%



Efficient and Sustainable Practices

- Reorganized staff and created Bureau of Capital Projects, Planning and Construction.
- Replaced boardwalk and pier decking with composite, recycled, 25-year guaranteed decking.
- Built the Robinson Nature Center in accordance with LEED standards, making it one of the greenest buildings in the State and slated to receive LEED Platinum certification.
- Successfully enriched athletic fields over 3 years, by minimizing chemical use and converting to an organic nutrient system to improve the soil's ecosystem.
- Worked with Blossoms of Hope to plant 31 native Pink Dogwoods at no cost. This program initiative began in 2003 to beautify the County, promote tourism, and raise money to benefit those coping with cancer. Over 1,500 trees have been planted.
- Stream Re-Leaf planted 1,780 trees, bringing the program's total trees planted to 7,497.
- Planted 121,761 trees through the Forest Mitigation program, bringing total acres of reforestation to 359.
- Installed new energy-efficient sports lighting at Cedar Lane Park using an Energy Block Grant of \$997,000. The new high-tech smart lamps and photometric energy conservation lamp structures greatly reduce light pollution and decrease energy consumption by approximately 50,636 k.w.h. per year. This is a 27% increase in energy efficiency that will save the County approximately \$430,000 in energy costs over the next 25 years.
- Howard County Detention Center inmates helped to raise tree seedlings for reforestation efforts at park sites, for a total savings of \$3,920.



New Services

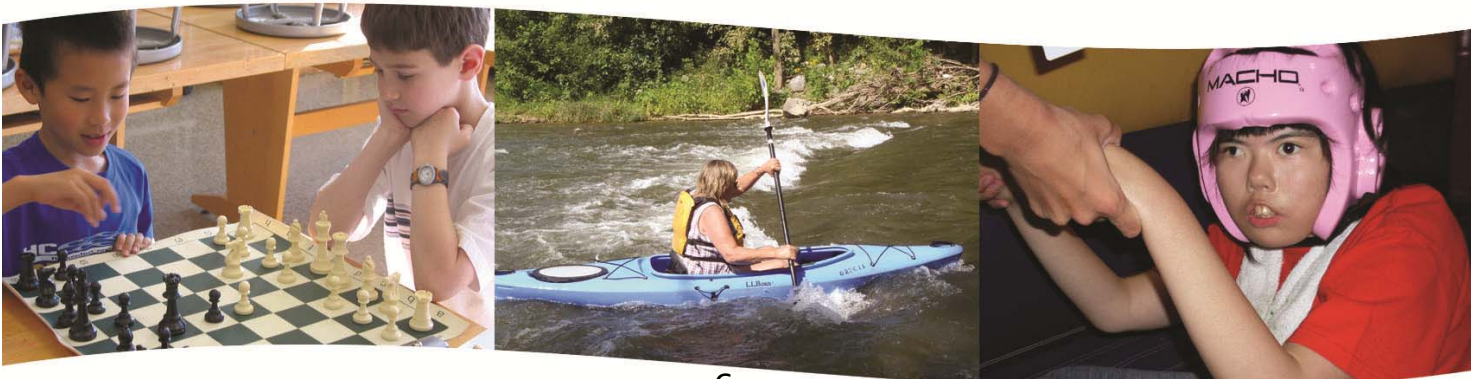
- Accepted two additional credit cards for online registration, increasing credit card sales by 11%.
- Installed low pressure sodium lighting along the designed walkway route at Timbers at Troy golf course, allowing the public to utilize the driving range for extended night-time hours and increasing revenue.
- Expanded Park Ranger program to improve conditions in the historic Savage Mill area adjacent to Savage Park, near the confluence of the Middle and Little Patuxent Rivers.
- Started the construction of Blandair Park, Phase I.
- Completed the construction of the Centennial Park Boat Ramp.
- Completed master plan for the new Roger Carter Recreation Center design.

New Capital Projects

- Opened the North Laurel Community Center to serve the southeastern portion of the County. The facility is shared by the Departments of Recreation & Parks, Health, Police, and the Office on Aging. It includes a fitness room, commercial kitchen, double gymnasium, pre-school classrooms, multipurpose rooms, and senior activity room.
- Acquired 40.21 acres of Parkland, bringing the total acreage to 5,581.78.
- Acquired 170.09 acres of Open Space, bringing the total acreage to 3,505.47.
- Completed construction of the Robinson Nature Center. The award-winning 26,000 SF center was built with assistance from Program Open Space on the former 18-acre farm of James and Anne Robinson, whose dream was to share their love of nature. Before the grand opening, staff were hired and programs were created. After opening, visitors experienced innovative exhibits and an exciting NatureSphere planetarium show. This “Green Building” is on track for a Platinum Certificate, (the highest rating in the LEED program) for its sustainable design features, such as geothermal wells, green roof, porous pavement, and use of local materials.
- Started Blandair Park Phase I construction (the first section of a 300-acre park). Three new synthetic-turf sports fields, a large playground, picnic shelter, comfort station and parking lot are scheduled to open in 2012. New paths will connect to the County’s pathway network, enabling a walk-to and bike-to park in the heart of Columbia. The design of Phase II will feature two ball diamonds and five tennis courts.

Newsworthy Efforts

- Implemented the Coaches Registry pilot program and combined agency requirements into one process (American Sport Education Program, Annual Background Check, and Online Concussion education). Approved coaches receive an ID card with a 1-year expiration date.
- Fabricated and installed eight wooden truss bridges ranging from 24 to 38 linear feet at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, Western Regional Park, and Rockburn Park. The bridges allow safe pedestrian travel and accommodate maintenance vehicles and personnel. In-house fabrication and construction saved the County approximately \$120,000.
- Received a \$30,000 National Recreation Trails grant for East Columbia pathway connections and renovations between Cradlerock School, Owen Brown shopping center, Southwick housing, and East Columbia sports fields.
- Developed and installed the County’s first “Floating Wetland Islands” at both Sewell’s Orchard Park and Font Hill Wetlands Park. These islands were devised as an innovative, but low-tech approach to help improve water quality. The floating wetland islands are covered with aquatic plants that produce oxygen, provide habitat, and remove nutrients from the water.



- Recycled 60% (14.6 tons of glass and cardboard) at Wine in the Woods. This Green Team initiative included staff, volunteers, and other Howard County Departments and won the County's 2011 Green Award.
- Received \$295,000 in program/service grants. They included the Middle Patuxent Environmental Foundation, Howard County Housing, State of Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, Local Children's Board, and the Howard County Board of Education.

New Partnerships

- Lose the Training Wheels, Inc. Bike Camp and Howard County Autism Society
- Howard County Detention Center—Used inmate labor during the park season to help maintain parks and provide event services. The value of the inmate labor was \$9,527.00.
- James and Anne Robinson Foundation—Provided partial funding for the Robinson Nature Center.
- Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE)—Designed and constructed a training course for mountain biking at Rockburn Park, with contributions totaling \$150,000.
- Housing Commission—Created a project that will replace the aging Roger Carter Recreation Center as part of the overall Ellicott City redevelopment project for Hilltop and Ellicott Terrace housing developments.
- Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas (MARA)—Continued a project which so far has found three previously unreported species in Howard County. Two introduced species verified are False Map Turtle and Alligator Snapping Turtle. The Red-bellied Cooter is a native turtle verified for the first time in the County.
- Health Department—Joined Smoke Free Parks campaign to promote healthier outdoor experiences by prohibiting smoking at all County parks.
- Savage Community and Police Department—Returned the overused and deteriorating Savage Mill Trail and the Middle Patuxent River to a family-friendly and safe outdoor experience. This was achieved by partnering and by expanding our park ranger program.
- Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), Children's Hospital, and the Health Department—Implemented a Sports Concussion Education and Testing program for Howard County High Schools, enabling Recreation and Parks-registered 8th graders to get a jump on the mandatory HCPSS Concussion Baseline testing before starting 9th grade.
- Created a sports concussion pilot for our football, wrestling and lacrosse programs.



New Mission, Vision & Core Values

Mission: To responsibly manage natural resources; provide excellent parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities for the community; and ensure the highest quality of life for current and future generations.

Vision: The Department of Recreation and Parks strives to deliver recreation and leisure opportunities that will improve the health and well-being of the community and to serve as model stewards of the environment by managing, protecting, and conserving our resources for a sustainable future.

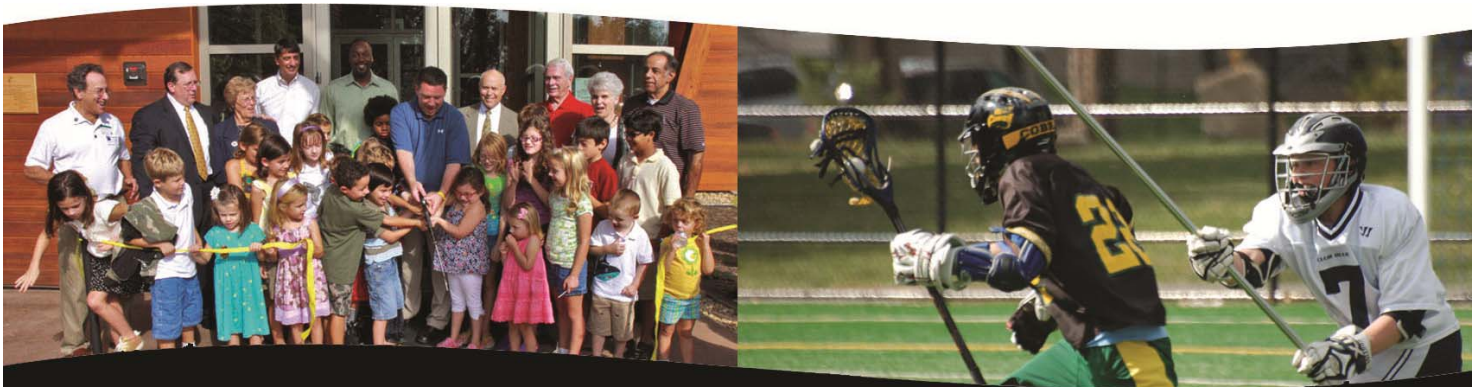
Core Values:

- Exceptional Customer Service
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Knowledgeable, Well-trained Staff
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Trend Setting

Accreditation

Howard County Recreation and Parks is accredited through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). To achieve accreditation, the Department was required to meet over 150 standards encompassing all operations contained in leisure services. These professional standards serve as an aid for improving performance and maintaining quality.

They provide park and recreation agencies with an ability to evaluate their operation, while achieving and maintaining a level of efficiency and effectiveness. Howard County Recreation and Parks achieved accreditation in 2001 and re-accreditation in 2006, and preparations are underway to attain re-accreditation in 2012.



Howard County
RECREATION & PARKS

To Register: Call, Click or Come In

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