

2020 Annual Snapshot

**Centre Region
Parks and Recreation Authority**

Centre Region Parks and Recreation

“Through a pandemic looking glass!”





Chairperson's Annual Letter

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?," said Alice.

"That depends a good deal on where you want to go," said the Cat.

These quotes from Lewis Carroll's *"Alice's Adventure in Wonderland"* pretty much sum up the roller coaster ride of 2020.

The staff of the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Agency certainly knew where they wanted to go at the beginning of the year--providing, as usual, the high-quality programs and events that all of us in the Region have come to anticipate and enjoy. Two of the highlights were the 3rd Annual Winter Carnival and the 3rd Annual Cornhole Tournament. Along with Centre Region Parks and Recreation, staff was preparing to start a project to evaluate the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center's boardwalk and participating in talks with State College Borough about planning the development of an Action Sports Park. We were working on next steps for the Whitehall Road Regional Park as land development plan had just been approved. We had just purchased new software to make program registration easier and more cost-efficient. It was going to be a terrific year!

As you know, everyone's world changed in March 2020. That's when everyone questioned which way they ought to go from there, just like Alice. By April, 80% of staff were working from home. Agency staff and Authority members were learning that Zoom was more than just moving fast. Staff implemented COVID-19 safety measures, following state and federal guidelines. Programs were held safely; those that couldn't be held safely were cancelled. Despite rotating furloughs among staff, things got done.

Most of the scheduled capital projects were completed. Park Forest Pool had a much needed re-plastering project completed. The Spring Creek Education Building was power washed and re-stained. A project management company was put in place to get project bid documents prepared for Whitehall Road Regional Park. A team was put together and a consultant hired to evaluate the boardwalk at Millbrook Marsh Nature Center. Staff and Authority members started working on implementing the Action Plan from the Comprehensive Study completed in March.

The Park Picture Pursuit 2020 Challenge took place. Easter happened in July with the "Egg My Yard" project. Sports leagues and softball tournaments were held. Summer camps were held. Many new and creative activities were developed and tested. We even had a Halloween Costume Contest, physically-distanced, in partnership with the Nittany Mall. And several holiday activities in December.

The year 2020 was indeed "curiouser and curiouser." Especially as guidelines changed at a rapid pace. But all of us appreciated the fact that we had so many wonderful parks to play in, so many beautiful trails to hike, and access to shared-use paths on which to walk and bike. Our parks system has proven to be the crown jewel in the Centre Region that we've always known it to be.

Kathy Matason, Chairperson
Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority



Authority members (L to R): Bill Keough (Ferguson), Kathy Matason (College), Tom Daubert (Borough), and Cindy Solic (Patton).
Not pictured: Diane Ishler (Harris) and Shannon Messick (SCASD).

The Authority's Mission

We inspire the Centre Region to learn, play, protect, and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities in sustainable natural spaces and places.

The Authority's Vision

The Centre Region is a vibrant area that enjoys a tremendous quality of life through great parks and exceptional recreation opportunities. The parks and recreation system is part of daily life and shapes the character of the Centre Region.

Natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources cultivate outstanding experiences, health, enjoyment, fun, and learning for all people. Residents are proud stewards and supporters of an extraordinary, sustainable parks and recreation system.

As the Centre Region's population continues to grow, so does the demand for more parks, recreation programs, indoor and outdoor facilities, and interconnected bikeways and trails. To address these challenges, we work closely with our residents, streamline operations to become more efficient, maximize the use of alternative funding sources, and place an increased emphasis on partnerships and responsible stewardship of the environment.

It is through Community Connections that our Agency has the greatest effect. Through relationship building, we connect to each other, whether learning a new craft, attending an educational seminar, playing on the tennis court, or partnering with another Agency to provide a new service.

After almost 60 days without programming and facility use due to the learning curve of operating with COVID-19 protocols, the Agency was able to re-start some of its programs and eventually its facility operations in mid-summer. What we heard once

everyone settled into the programs' schedules and the facilities' operations is that they were so happy to have a safe space for active or passive recreation with their family. Community members were so thankful to see our full-time maintenance team in the parks every day handling restroom cleanings, trash removal, and general park maintenance. The parks became a refuge from isolation during quarantines; people maybe enjoyed the parks even more than they ever had and found new ways to gather safely, to play together and rediscover those favorite summer games, or just to find those Zen moments where it allowed people to be free from the worry surrounding the coronavirus.

Our staff found new ways to connect with our customers by providing craft kits via drive-by pick-ups, outdoor game ideas and resources that families could play at home, free online performances or science experiences, and park challenges to get people moving while challenging their problem-solving skills, and much more. While staying physically-distanced, we still connected in-person with children and adults through Family Fun Nights in the parks, through special events like the Kids on Wheels Parade, and through Rec In The Parks Summer Camp with creekside games, crafts, and quiet time.

The results of staying connected to our community meant also staying connected to our profession--other professionals in parks and recreation. Staff attending Zoom meetings for discussions about how others were handling summer camps, swimming pools, or general programming. The desire to keep connected to our community, even during a period of time where we worked from home, kept our staff busy as we needed to shift our thinking, our habits, and our standards of practice. We needed to find new communication methods while re-designing programs that could work outdoors or virtually. We kept our followers abreast of changes to our programs and facility operations via social media and a robust COVID-19 Activity Page and a News & Updates Page on our website.

At the end of 2020, all of our Staff can be very proud of the work they did while facing challenges unprecedented in any of our careers. We kept our community connections in place, provided smiles and activities for families to remain connected positively during what can only be described as a stressful time, and kept shifting our ideas and plans. Our goals are to continue to provide new and innovative opportunities for children, families, and adults to keep their family connections strong and for them to feel connected to their neighbors and friends as well...safely and only physically-distanced, while we rebuild our community's health.

Community Connections



Customer Feedback: Rec in the Parks Weeks 5 & 6 - "We were nervous about camp attendance due to COVID but my granddaughter desperately needed to get outside, get away from all the 'devices' and spend time with other kids. She attended two of the camps and loved both of them. Weather, activities. etc. were all good, but the counselors were outstanding. THANK YOU!"



Highlights from 2020

Pivot. Shift. Change. Repeat.

These were the words that staff uttered no less than 1,000 times during the Summer of 2020 as we learned new delivery methods to keep our customers connected and active.

Residents Stayed Active

The parks remained very busy as they were outdoor, safe spaces where people could exercise, read, play, or relax, in a physically-distanced manner. Classes and activities moved outdoors as well, so people had options to visit parks on their own or enjoy a class with others.

- 1207 program registrations
- 171 summer camp registrations
- 329 pavilion reservations

Rec On The Go...Went!

The Agency's Rec On The Go Family Fun Nights remained very popular during the summer months. The truck could be spotted at Blue Spring, Tusseyview, Meadows, Graysdale, Autumnwood, Suburban, Ambleside, and Holmes-Foster Parks from June through August. Children and adults enjoyed tons of games, crafts, and art projects in the parks while observing COVID-19 protocols.

91 residents played, drew, kicked, or threw

Swimming Remained Popular

Despite 50% capacity limits and no diving boards, slides, or Wibit use, the pools remained popular for healthy and safe recreation! The aquatics staff members kept very busy with cleaning protocols, customer service, educating the public, and monitoring pool activity.

1,846 season pool passes sold

26,383 season pool pass uses

14,705 paid gate admissions

Fitness Classed Moved Into Fresh Air

Typically, the majority of the Agency's fitness classes are held indoors; in 2020, the majority of those classes moved outdoors or into a virtual option via Zoom. The Agency staff learned alongside our instructors ways to deliver these programs while keeping the instructors and students engaged and healthy.

91 participants either Zoom'd their way to fitness or spent time in live classes in the parks.

Fall Guided Programs Provided Lessons

The Millbrook Marsh Nature Center's Guided Programs kept pre-scheduled visitors busy with tales of the Marsh along with environmental education lessons in subjects like Insects, Animal Habitat, and Wetlands and Watersheds. By the Fall, people had learned a safe routine outdoors when physical distancing couldn't be maintained, and what better way to enjoy the Marsh but with a trained Guide.

109 children and adults attended Guided Programs

WHO WE ARE BY THE NUMBERS

(includes properties/equipment for which CRPR is responsible.)

- 56 regional and municipal park sites
- 8 tennis courts
- 4 pickleball courts
- 10 dual-lined tennis/pickleball courts
- 29 rentable pavilions
- 46 rentable sports fields
- 40 playgrounds
- 6 formal restroom facilities
- 929.9 parkland acres maintained

Highlights from 2020

Sports Knocked It Out Of The Park

Local sports enthusiasts found a way to keep playing while remaining healthy. They enjoyed swinging a bat or a racket, spiking a ball, or throwing a football. The Agency hosted several softball leagues during the summer and fall as well as flag football for youth and adults.



- 780 players enrolled in six different softball leagues
- 25 players hit in the Summer Tennis League
- 66 players dug and spiked in the Sand Volleyball League
- 24 players learned to play Pickleball
- 70 players went for the flag in the Adult Flag Football League
- 114 youth players were participants in the Youth Flag Football League
- 168 youth ran in three Centre Region Youth Cross Country Meets

Millbrook Marsh Nature Center Goes On The Road

Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, in partnership with the State College Area School District, through its Community Education Extended Learning (CEEL) programming, continued their off-site visits to various elementary schools in 2020.

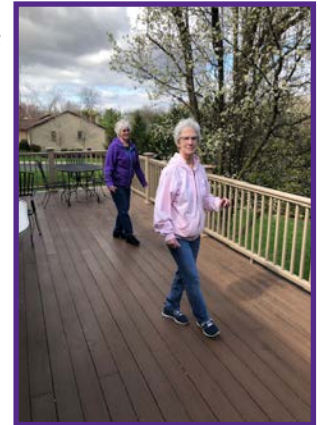
MMNC Staff were able to outreach to 657 students after school with their environmental education programs.



Customer Feedback: Terra Noerr said, "Loved the Racer Bib and I can't wait to receive this medal. This guy right here (my hubs) is my biggest fan...ran it with me! This run meant a lot to me for many reasons. #virtualvirusvamoose 11/20/2020"

COVID-19 Limited Engagement With Seniors

The pandemic really took a toll on the operations of the Active Adult Center. The Center was open in the winter of 2020, but then closed in late Spring and remained closed in the Summer. The Center re-opened in late August and then closed in November. Despite closures, the Center's staff continued outreach, mailing cards and letters, and creating Activity Kits during the first closure period. Those kits were delivered with the Meals on Wheels program, and kept the seniors engaged. Some popular classes transitioned to online platforms so those with technology options at home could participate.



- 78 service days in 2020 compared to 238 in 2019
- 1,086 meals served in 2020 at the Center compared to 4,206 in 2019
- 131 participants daily average in 2020 compared to 282 participants daily average in 2019



Customer Feedback: Jay Horgas says "Thank you for keeping Welch Pool open through September. It was fantastic to swim this late in the year. I loved it."

Highlights from 2020



Millbrook Marsh Nature Center's Spring Creek Education Building was power-washed and stained.



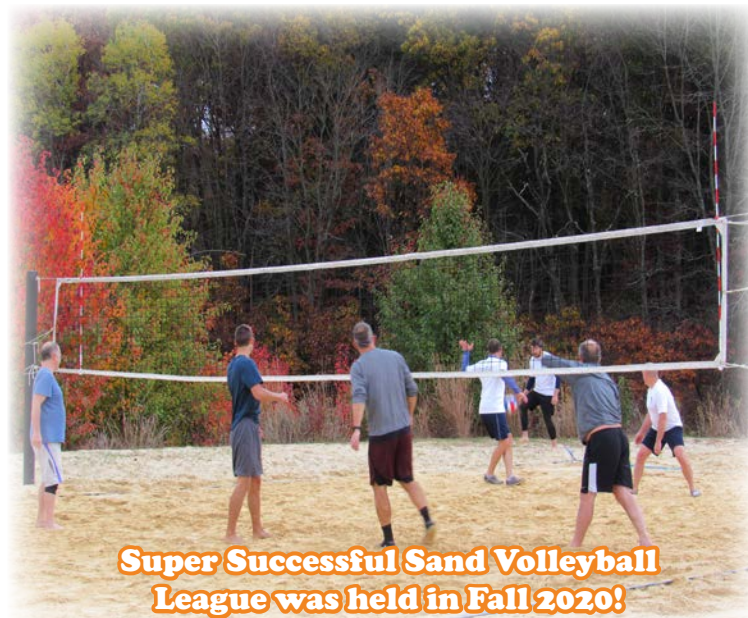
Parks Operations purchased its first green mower as it works to become more energy-efficient for routine maintenance.



1215 Barnstable Lane won Best Theme in the Agency's Holiday Decorating Contest!



This was the BEFORE photo of Park Forest Pool, which received a new coat of plaster in 2020. This photo was after the first sanding.



Super Successful Sand Volleyball League was held in Fall 2020!



First-ever BioBlitz was held across 11 parks in the Centre Region!

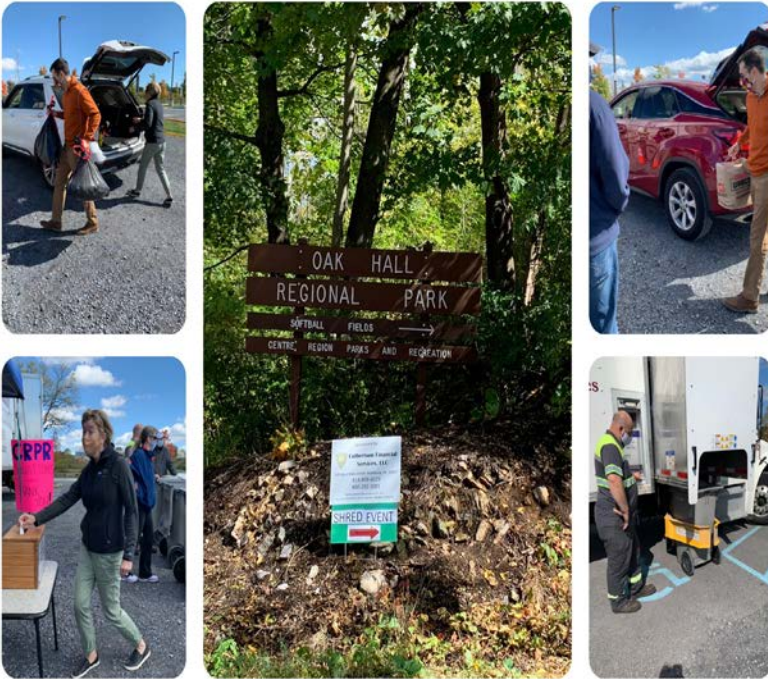
Highlights from 2020



The Active Adult Center partnered with the State College Rotary for a special Thanksgiving meal delivery!



A Drive-Thru Halloween Costume Contest kept the annual tradition alive during the pandemic!



The Grinch Mystery Challenge was the second park mystery challenge in 2020. Some teams went all out for costume points!



A first-time shredding event was held at Oak Hall Regional Park which raised \$1,000 for our Youth Scholarships Program. CRPR partnered with Culbertson Financial in Boalsburg for this event.



Ring Making was a successful Make-N-Take program at Millbrook Marsh.



Highlights from 2020

As you begin to review the 2020 data collected for Parks Operations on the next page, please review the following definitions for each category. As the Agency continues to refine its data collection, we hope to be able to get more specific by adding additional categories where there are trends in the data. The Agency is also looking for technology grant opportunities where we can provide in-the-field tablets for staff to record in Excel to make the data collection process easier, faster, and less cumbersome for the staff.

Parkland in Acres

Owner / Leasee	State College Borough	College Township	Ferguson Township	Harris Township	Patton Township	Totals
Municipality	114.8 acres	173.7 acres	197.5 acres	68.4 acres	742.7 acres ***	1,297.1 acres
Non-Public	0 acres	36.3 acres	80 acres **	25 acres	0 acres	141.3 acres
COG/Authority *	7.3 acres	130 acres	104.5 acres	21 acres	4.4 acres	267.2 acres
Total Acreage	122.1 acres	340 acres	382 acres	114.4 acres	747.1 acres	1,705.6 acres
Total Maintained by CRPR	122.1 acres	257.9 acres	282.5 acres	89.4 acres	177.3 acres	929.2 acres

The Centre Region Parks System currently includes 56 regional facilities and parks with 929.2 acres which are currently maintained by the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Agency through our cooperative regional parks and recreation services agreement with the local municipalities. Notes about the above table:

- The nine-acre Tussey Pond Park (Harris Township) will be coming online at some point in the future, and it is expected that Parks Operations will assume management and maintenance of that park.
- The four acres of the 42-acre Grays Woods Park (Patton Township) have not been officially adopted into the maintenance and management program, although Parks Operations is assisting with some maintenance at this time. The closeout of the playground installation remains the final tasks.
- The nine-acre Songbird Sanctuary (Ferguson Township) will be coming online at some point in the future as a natural, open space area. The Agency will not maintain this facility.

*In 2020, COG/Authority owned/leased land includes the William L. Welch and Park Forest Community Pools, Radio Park Elementary School ballfields, Oak Hall Regional Park, Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, Whitehall Road Regional Park, Ferguson Elementary Ballfields, Spring Creek Elementary Ballfield, Hess Softball Complex.

**Includes 80 acres of former municipal authority land preserved for watershed protection; not considered parkland.

***Includes Patton Woods Natural Recreation Area which is considered passive parkland (62.7 acres) and the Haugh Tract (465.97) acres.

DEFINITIONS

General Park Category: Includes all trash and recycling, restroom and pavilion maintenance, daily park checks, trails and walkways maintenance, gravel parking lot repairs, and repairs to park equipment (trash cans, tables, fences, etc.).

Equipment Category: Routine service of all equipment, cleaning equipment, vehicles, tools etc.

Turf Category: General mowing and trimming of parks, and brushhog cutting of secondary areas.

Athletic Fields Category: Mowing, overseeding, and fertilization for all diamond and rectangular sports fields, ballfield grooming, lining, and base placement and repairs, safety netting installation and inspections, fence repairs, etc.

Playgrounds Category: Adding safety mulch, inspecting, cleaning, and repairs.

Paperwork and Meetings Category: Includes completing all daily documents (time sheets, work distribution sheets, spray logs, etc), loading/unloading tools and equipment, travel time to sites, required training for certifications as well as misc. training opportunities, Mechanic's time for documentation, fueling vehicles and equipment, etc.

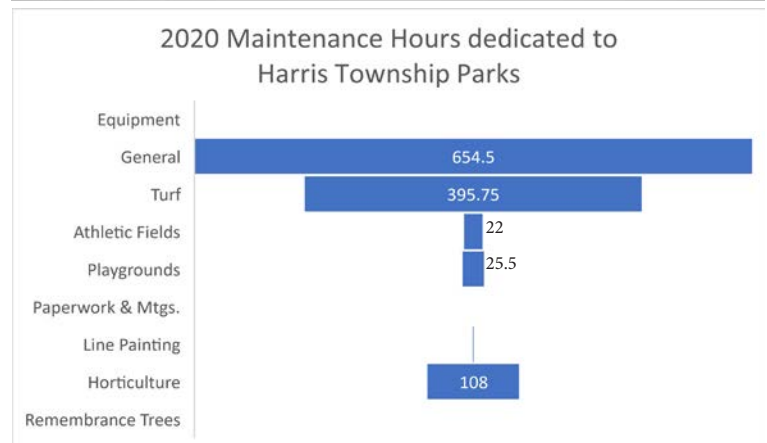
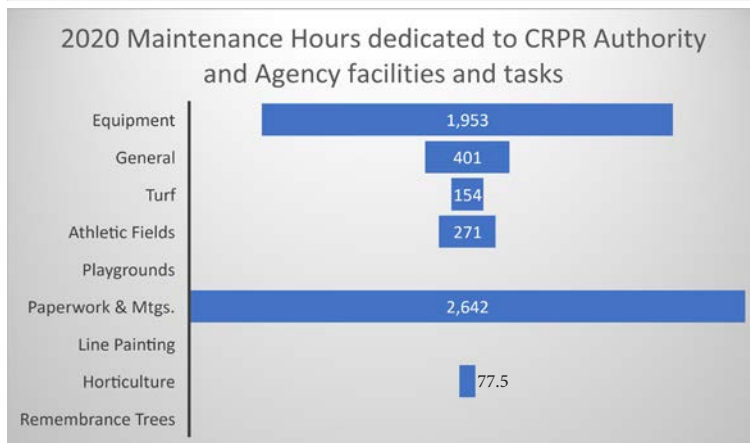
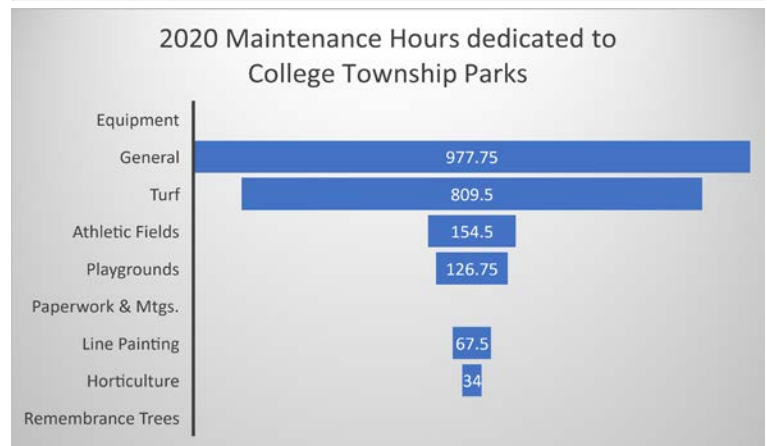
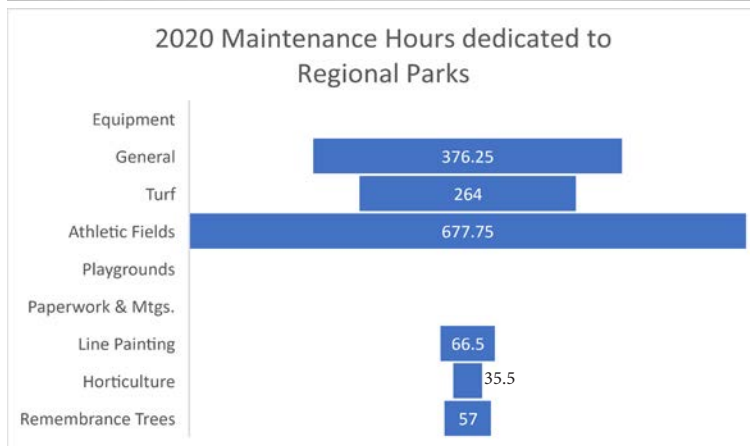
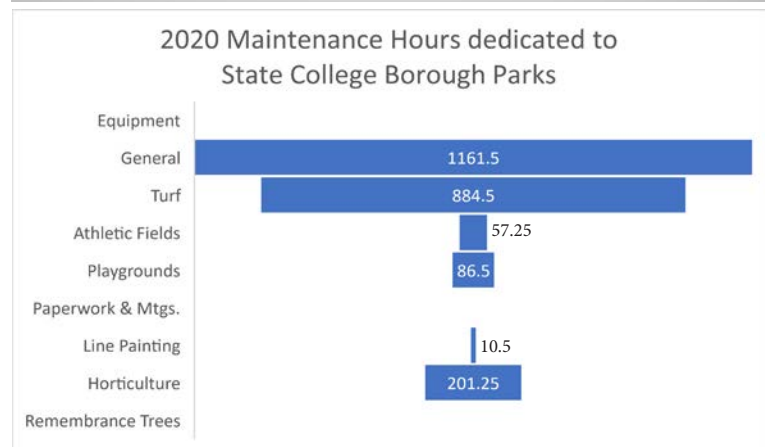
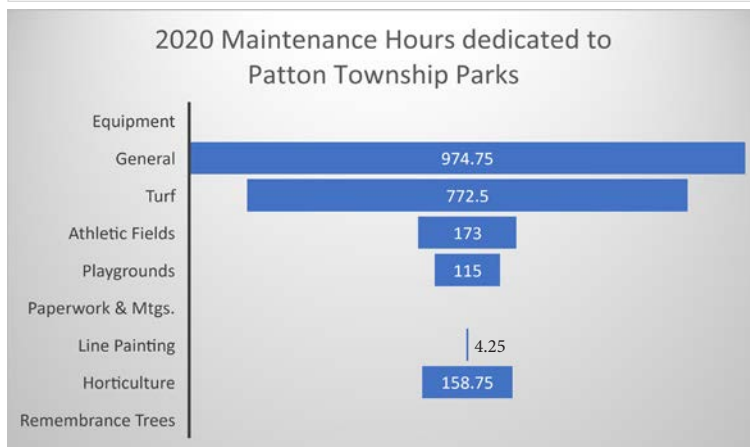
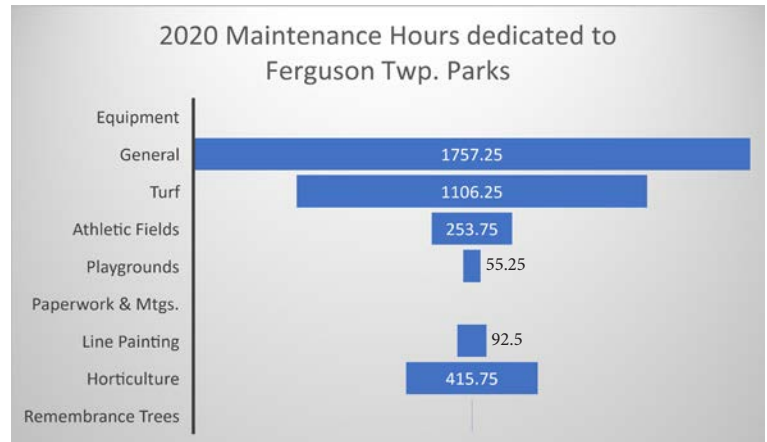
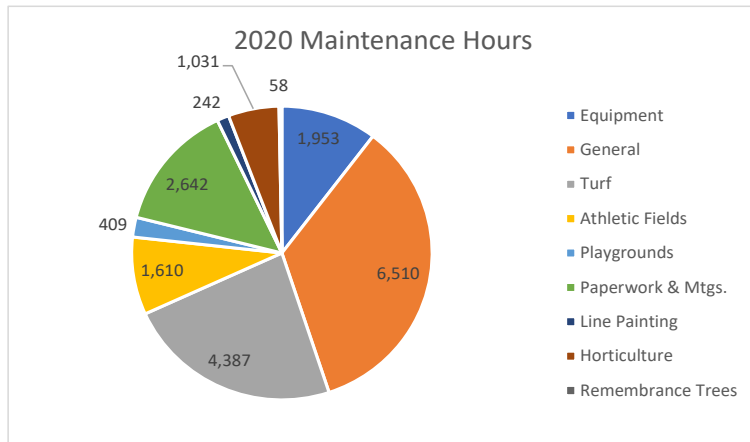
Line Painting Category: This is seasonal painting for rectangular fields (hours have dropped greatly due to robotic painter). Please note, some of these hours are paid back by clubs that elect to have the Agency maintain lines for them.

Horticulture: Planting/flower beds maintenance, tree pruning, installation and care of Remembrance/MVMH Trees



Highlights from 2020

Maintenance Hours across the various municipal parks and Authority facilities and parks.





2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review Key Findings

NRPA's 2021 Performance Review includes averaged data submitted by agencies across the United States using 2020 metrics to include budget info., FTEs, acreage, etc. Agency data is compared on the next page.



Residents per
Playground:

3,607

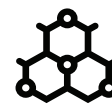
Full-Time Equivalent Employees
(FTEs) per 10,000 Residents:

8.2



Operating Expenditures
per Capita:

\$88.30/year



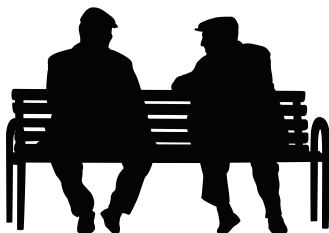
58%

of park and recreation agencies
deliver STEM programming to
youth and young adults

Acres of Parkland
per 1,000 Residents: **9.9**

Residents per Park:

2,277



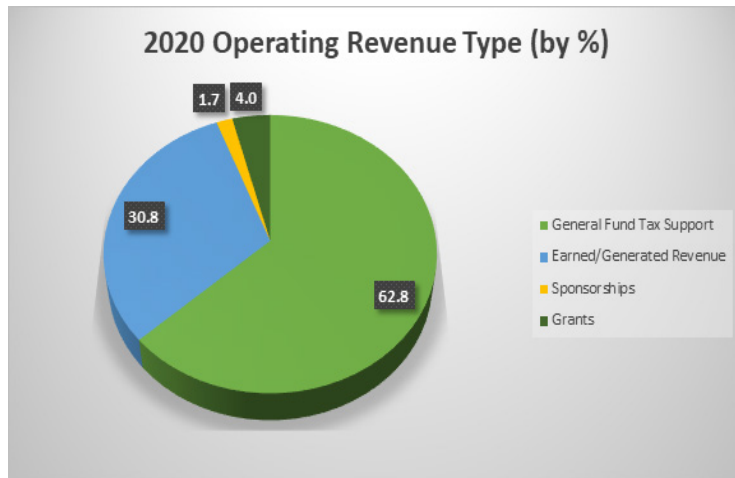
Revenue to Operating
Expenditures:

22.9%

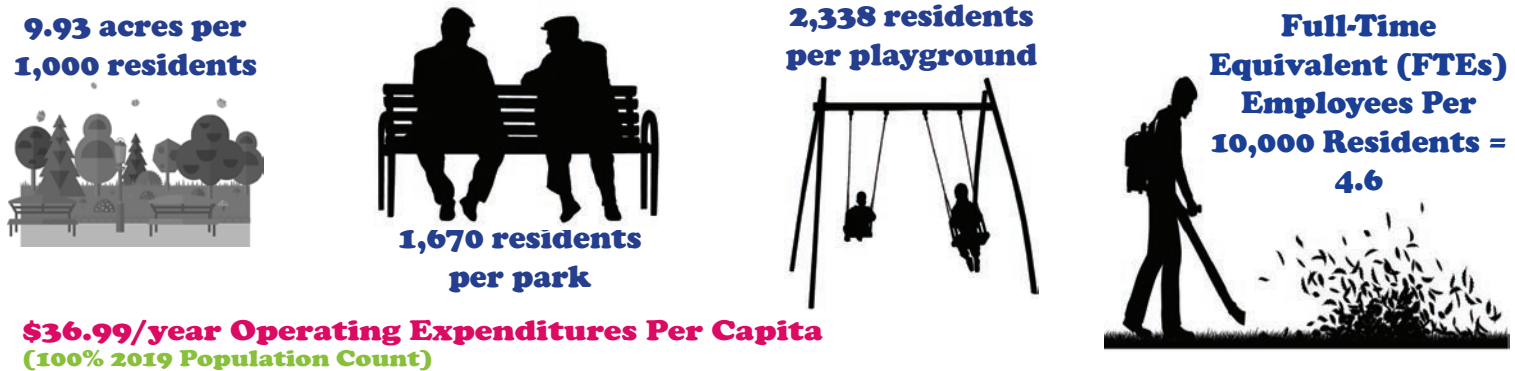


Highlights from 2020

Centre Region Parks and Recreation Agency data comparison to NRPA Key Findings from previous page.

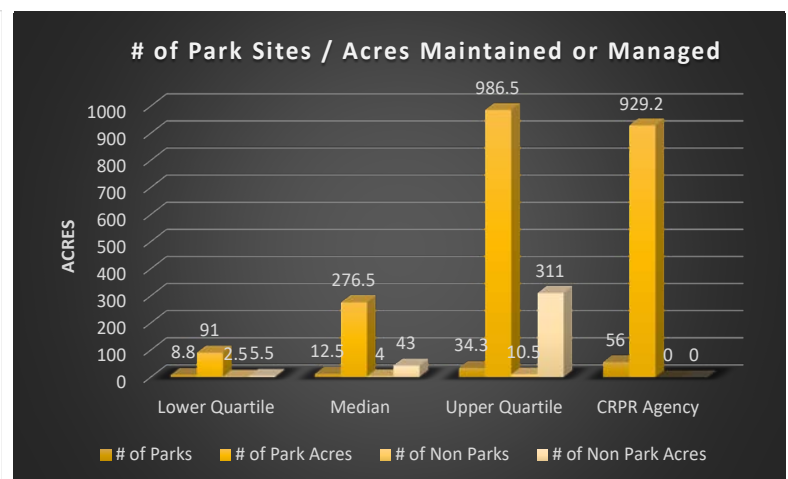
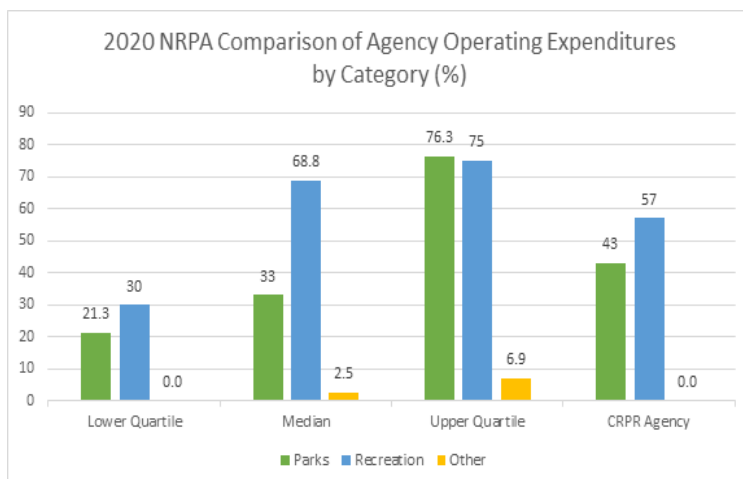


All Topics	Patton township, Centre County, Pennsylvania	Harris township, Centre County, Pennsylvania	Ferguson township, Centre County, Pennsylvania	College township, Centre County, Pennsylvania	State College borough, Pennsylvania
Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019)	15,805	6,040	19,462	10,055	42,160
PEOPLE					
Population					
Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019)	15,805	6,040	19,462	10,055	42,160
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2019)	15,155	4,901	17,867	9,545	41,980
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2019, (V2019)	4.3%	23.2%	8.9%	5.3%	0.4%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	15,311	4,873	17,690	9,521	42,034



\$36.99/year Operating Expenditures Per Capita
(100% 2019 Population Count)

\$73.93/year Operating Expenditures Per Capita
(2019 Population Count minus PSU enrollment 2019-2020*)
*Source: Penn State News, November 2, 2020





CENTRE REGION

Parks & Recreation