2019 Annual Agency Snapshot
Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority
Just a short fifty years ago, construction started on the second regional pool in the Centre Region, Park Forest. Development was completed on High Point Park in the Borough of State College. Development started on Spring Creek Park in College Township. Just a short fifty years ago!

How much has changed in those intervening years. In 2019, your Centre Region Parks and Recreation Agency achieved a number of equally unique milestones. Both regional pools, Welch and Park Forest, continued to provide refreshing respites from the heat of summer. In early 2020, some re-plastering work will be done at Park Forest to refresh and refurbish the pool for the safety and enjoyment of all. There are plans to add some great features to High Point Park. And, we are poised to add another wonderful regional park to our roster of beautiful places to enjoy in the Centre Region!

The year started with a new communication adventure for the Agency and the Authority--all Authority board meetings were recorded and broadcast by C-NET. This was a great opportunity for viewers to see how the Agency and Authority work to keep the Centre Region a “Recreation Destination.” We started the pre-application process with Ferguson Township for the land development plan for Whitehall Road Regional Park.

Part of the forward movement on Whitehall Road Regional Park (WRRP) has been extensive grant writing by Agency staff for sports field lighting, landscaping, and for a truly unique feature of the planned park. We are proud to announce that WRRP will have the first all-ability, universally-accessible playground in the Centre Region. Funded by loan funds, grants and donations, this playground will provide opportunities for children with disabilities to enjoy specialized playground equipment with siblings and friends. Once again, adding to facilities that make the Centre Region truly a RECREATION DESTINATION...since 1966!

Speaking of developments, Agency staff have been involved in reviewing plans for an Action Sports Park that will be constructed in High Point Park in the Borough. Plans include challenging courses for skateboarders, BMX bikers, and scooter riders. The Borough has committed some funding, and additional fundraising is on-going. We formed partnerships with Centre Soccer for fundraising and the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau for marketing of sports fields at Whitehall Road Regional Park.

Strategic grant-writing by Agency staff resulted in a $65,000 grant from the PA Agency on Aging that provided the Active Adult Center with permanent signage, automatic entrance sliding doors, which provide safety for our seniors as well as a quieter environment for their activities, and more.

During 2019, Millbrook Marsh Nature Center saw improvements in the installation of a liquid rubber roof coating and new gutters on the Barn, keeping it safe and dry for the weddings, children's activities, and barn dances for the future! The future is ensured, too, with the negotiation of a new lease with Penn State.

Once again, it's been a great year. Lots of challenges and lots of rewards. We are looking forward to 2020!

Kathy Matason

Kathy Matason, Chairperson, Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority
Our 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 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.

VISION

126 Community Partners helped at facilities or brought programming to the community!

63,346 PA Non-Profits employ 790,368 employees, over 15% of the state's workforce, and generate over $132 billion in annual revenues.

923.4 acres maintained by CRPR Parks Operations

444 Volunteers provided 1,158.75 hours of in-kind work, with a rate of $25.43/hr., equaling $29,467.01 in value. (Independent Sector, 2020)

138 children celebrated at Millbrook Marsh Nature Center birthday parties!

$662,450 raised through grants, foundations, and donors.

56 parks / regional facilities served 93,522 residents; that is 1,670 residents/site, better than the national average of 2,281 residents/site. (NRPA Agency Performance Review)

558 local volleyball players bumped, set, and spiked!

3,307 season pool passes sold with 45,294 pool pass holder visits!

4,206 meals were served at the Centre Region Active Adult Center!

37 small and large special events were held across the Centre Region with 5,554 attendees!

25,539 people paid single gate admissions to swim at Park Forest and Welch Community Pools.

510 local softball players competed on 8 regional park diamonds. 15 tournaments held at regional parks, including local/non-local teams, and approx. 3,590 players.

3,194 group participants walked the marsh and learned about its valuable ecosystem!

3,022 individuals visited the Centre Region Active Adult Center, averaging 252 people each month!

124 instructional programs were held for multiple ages including swimming, arts & crafts, and learn to play!
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 softball diamond, or playing Kick The Can at summer camp.

The Agency’s summer camp programming has been a part of the community for over 50 years. Ms. June Brown connected to so many children and their families through the summer playground camps she managed; she was celebrated in 2016 for 60 years of service; think about the 1,000s of children who played games with June, or made craft creations, or met their best friends under June’s guidance.

What our staff love to hear the most is how our summer campers from the 1970s and 1980s are now bringing their children or their grandchildren to the Agency’s summer camps. While summer camp programming has modernized along with guidelines and requirements, the heart of summer camps is **FUN** and **MAKING MEMORIES**! These campers had such good experiences and remember the games they played, the crafts they made, and the summer camp facility where they played tag, ran an obstacle course, or swam in the afternoon.

The one summer activity when we hear this “connection” comment the most is during the Summer Camp Carnival! Formerly known as the Peanut Carnival, the capstone event has been a staple of summer camp for years. The event seems to evoke many memories for our generations of summer campers. They remember the booth they built, the theme, and the decorations pulled together from poster board, scrap paper, paint, glue, and imagination!

We all know how great a community State College is; former campers registering for our summer camps is a clear testament to why they return to live in a place like State College. Their kids can have similar positive experiences as they had, such as making new friends, experiencing new challenges, and just enjoying the laughter that summer camp brings to children.

Our goal is to continue to provide opportunities for children, families, and adults to make these same connections.
Highlights...

January - Active Guide’s printing contract updated with the Centre County Gazette...

February - First public meeting for the Centre Region Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Study with over 150 people....

March - General Recreation, Inc. chosen as the “We Play Together” playground designer...

April - New registration software and processing research... Welch Pool building restained.... MMNC Barn roof repaired...

May - Active Adult Center permanent signage and new glass enclosure installed...

June - Director graduates from Leadership Centre County... Rec On The Go truck wrap complete and programming begins...

July - First-ever statewide Parks and Recreation Professionals Day celebrated in State College... Agency’s new office lease approved...

August - Successful “So Long Summer Shindig” held at Tudek Park...

September - Agency staff attend NRPA’s Congress in Baltimore... MMNC Nature Center barn staining...

October - Halloween Parade held outside in new location... New pickleball courts open at Green Hollow Park...

November - Agency relocates to new offices... Agency staff participate in first of two retreats... Second comprehensive study public meeting held to discuss results of public survey ...

December - Whitehall Road Regional Park’s Land Development Plan approved... Agency staff participate second retreats...

This year began a long transition for the Agency and its staff as we began to look forward to improvements to services for the changing population in the Centre Region.

This transition started when the Comprehensive Study’s consultants really started digging into the Agency’s data, services, history, maintenance practices, governance, and also began meeting with the public, community leaders and sports groups, and Agency staff. The resulting document will guide the Agency over the next five-ten years.

Staff began an internal transition by instituting some Comprehensive Study recommendations in 2019. For example, it was planned to move the Fee Policy approval to the spring in 2020 so that it is complete prior to the budget process.

The Agency also wanted to improve customer services so they began researching new registration software and credit card processors so that costs could be lowered and services improved. The Agency staff also began creating a more formal Operations Manual, capturing our daily and yearly tasks in a document that will be used for training, consistency, and guidance.

A long-standing project--Whitehall Road Regional Park--took a major leap forward with the Land Development Plan approval and the receipt of additional grants and donations toward the project.

The move to the new Agency headquarters will provide better customer service spaces, both for parking and for processing. The new space offers growth opportunities for new staff and additional storage, which was desperately needed.
Below is a comparison of Agency Data vs. the National Recreation and Park Association’s Benchmarking Data, using agencies w/similar population areas.

Let's Compare...

2019 Comparison: Operating Expenditures Per Capita / Year

NRPA Benchmarking Data  $81.19
Agency Data  $35.00

Per NRPA: The lower quartile = $40 Per Capita/Year, and the upper quartile = $159 Per Capita/Year. The Agency is in the lower quartile for Per Capita/Year Operational Spending.

2019 COMPARISON: REVENUE-TO-OPERATING EXPENDITURES

NRPA Benchmarking Data  35.9
Agency Data  41.3

Per NRPA: The lower quartile = 13.7% Revenue-to-Operating Expenditures, and the upper quartile = 41.3% Revenue-to-Operating Expenditures. The Agency is in the upper quartile for Revenue-to-Operating Expenditures.

Facility Rentals within Municipalities/Rental Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Rental Permits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patton Township</td>
<td>$10,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harris Township</td>
<td>$17,225</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>College Township</td>
<td>$24,854</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State College Borough</td>
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</tbody>
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This chart includes all rental types: pavilions, Funbrellas, aquatics facilities, sports fields, and special events and fundraisers.

2019 Comparison: Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTEs) Per 10,000 Residents

NRPA Benchmarking Data  8.1
Agency Data  3.59

Per NRPA: The lower quartile = 5.3 FTEs, and the upper quartile = 16.8 FTEs. The Agency is in the lower quartile for FTEs per 10,000 residents.

Maintenance Types vs. Work Hours

- Athletic Fields 21%
- General Park 41%
- Turf Mowing 32%
- Play Equipment 2%
- Equipment 4%
**Flo Fit**: “Jessica was an awesome instructor, highly knowledgeable, super positive and easy to understand. Highly recommend!! Would love to see an indoor option offered in off season.”

**Summer Tennis League**: “I really appreciated the opportunity to play tennis in SC this summer. I’ve done the CRPR tennis lessons these past few summers and without that being offered this summer, the league was a great way to still get out on the courts. Thank you for organizing this!”

**Review of Millbrook Marsh Nature Center**: “One of the best kept secret outdoor gems in town. Great for a quick walk during lunch or an afternoon of exploring around the creeks and off the beaten paths and board walks. It changes with every season so photos never do it justice. Ducks and deer and birds of all kinds find their home here.”

**Youth Flag Football**: “Great program. It was great that my daughter could participate in the game of football, because she absolutely loves football. Perhaps there may be enough interest in a flag football league beyond 7th grade for both girls and boys as less parents are allowing their kids to play tackle. It’s worth looking into in my opinion.”

**Bitty Ballet**: “Bitty ballet is wonderful and so much better than having to sign on for a year long program. The instructors are fantastic and it gives the dancers a true ballet experience. I wish it was offered consistently throughout the year.”

**Yoga & Pilates Fusion**: “Loved this class and the instructor was amazing! Never liked Yoga before but now love it - only if Gena teaches it!”
More space, more programs, more connections

"It is so important in this modern world to connect people to their environment and to help them understand how they impact that environment. We use the hashtag #YourBackyardNatureCenter for Millbrook Marsh because the Marsh provides access to nature right in the heart of State College. Community members want us to expand programming, but to do that, we need additional space. Phase II construction will more than double the size of the Spring Creek Education Building. We will have more classroom space for inclement weather, and we'll add interpretive displays upstairs. The popular Puddle Jumpers program for preschoolers will have its own dedicated classroom.

"A large community room will be available for our own events as well as for community rentals, which will add a revenue stream to help Millbrook Marsh be more self-sustaining. Outside, a new welcome pavilion will provide restrooms, a water fountain and bottle-filling station, and wayfinding information. "We hope this $2.2 million project will benefit from a mix of funding sources, including municipal support, grants, fundraising events, and donations from community members. Individual donations — both large and small — are important because many funding organizations want to see that broad mix of support before offering grant dollars. We invite you to donate or to contact us and learn more about naming rights and other ways you can be part of the future of Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, #YourBackyardNatureCenter."

—Pamela Salokangas (left), CRPR Director, and Melissa Kauffman (right), Nature Center Supervisor

Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority operates Millbrook Marsh Nature Center to educate and inspire people about the natural world. Learn more about the future of the Marsh and the Spring Creek Education Building at www.CRPR.org/Millbrook-Marsh-Nature-Center.