

History

Bath Township Parks & Recreation was established after many years of recreation programs running through Bath Community Education volunteers. Spearheaded by Bath resident Tom Cooley, parents and community members came together to provide recreation programs (baseball, basketball, wrestling & football) for the youth from 1986-1999. The intent of the Program Coordinators and volunteers was that eventually the Township would form a Parks & Recreation Department and run all recreation programs through it.

The 2000-2004 Bath Township Community Recreation Plan (similar to today's 5 Year Recreation Plan) identified the Creation of a Recreation Program Coordinator Position with an hourly wage to provide a central point of coordination with the Bath Township government structure. The need was identified as being, "for a rapidly expanding community."

Since 2000, Bath Township has employed at least four Parks & Recreation Directors to serve in this capacity as part-time personnel. My employment began in 2009, and I stepped in to run the Baseball/Softball programs. My experience as an aide to the Athletic Director for my last two years of high school and as a parent volunteer in the Bath Community Education organization has been an asset to meeting the program/event needs in the Bath community. In 2009, we had approximately 12 programs on the books and were waiting on approval from the DNR for a grant that would transform the V. Jack Wiswasser Memorial Park into a barrier free playground. The barrier free playground became a reality in 2011 as community volunteers donated their time to construct a beautiful all inclusive playground. The 30 hour work week eventually increased to 32, and at the end of 2016 we had in place over 40 programs/events, some parks had seen renovations and new structures, a system has been put into place allowing those needing financial assistance to register at a reduced rate, the implementation of background checks for adults participating as volunteers has been established, procedures for programs/events have been identified as well as an evaluation system for all programs/events.

Program Numbers

Program numbers over the past six years have fluctuated for various reasons. Weather has the largest impact on programs. Take Flix on the Field for example; the uncertainty of weather over the past 12 months has caused a decrease in the number of attendees by 400, and Truck or Treat under the same conditions would see a decline in hundreds as well. Zumba Toning ran its course and saw a drastic decline in numbers last year which was eventually replaced with a new adult exercise program, Drums Alive. While this program has limited space available at the school during the months Farmer's Market occupies the BCC, it currently averages 16 participants per night and the addition of a few more could result in turning people away. On the Annual Report programs such as the Fishing Contest on Park Lake, Ice Skating, Flix on the Field, Truck or Treat and Fingers and Toes before It Snows will not identify specifics on participants as we had no way to monitor the number of people who choose to participate in these programs and/or the specifics on each since there is no registration to participate.

Registration numbers do not accurately reflect participation. Recreation programs generally meet multiple times in a season and include only the number of participants. The inclusion of the number of registrants as well as the number of adults attending for a social event would more accurately represent

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the total number of attendees in a program. The benefits received as families come together make events not only special for the participant but also for the spectators as a social gathering.

Many events offered are free and open to the public. Each event offered has a budget of \$250.00 or less. This level could not be maintained without the assistance of volunteers and donations received. Truck or Treat for example includes an estimated 500 Trick or Treaters. 25 businesses/families donate their time and treats to offer to our Ghosts and Goblins. Each easily spends \$100.00 in treats.

Sporting activities allow for a registration to be paid. Revenues taken in for sports programs determine its budget. Expenses in each sports budget will not be exceeded by the revenues taken in with the program paying for equipment and supplies needed. Sports teams that use the schools facilities consist of no less than 75% residents and many times closer to 100%. In an established agreement with the school, teams must be comprised of at least 75% Bath residents to use their facility free of charge to maintain the precedence that we are offered. It is important to note that many times when a non-resident youth attends one of our programs it is because they are "school of choice" students. They may not live in Bath, but they do attend the Bath School system and are equally as interested in attending programs/events with their classmates. The school identifies these participants as residents however in my reporting they are identified as a non-resident. Of all programs, we receive the most non-resident participants in the adult recreation programs.

Since 2009 the Parks & Recreation Office has increased the number of program offerings, developed a system to evaluate each program/event, procedures for an Internet Criminal History Access Tool (iCHAT) background check, a Scholarship Assistance Program fund, an online Procedures Manual for Parks & Recreation programs/events, researched a filter housing (Chlorine Injector) for Wiswasser Park, identified and assisted with parks renovation projects, a Program/Event Worksheet for each program, assisted in the development of and continuous maintenance of the Bath Township website Parks & Recreation pages as well as telephone cancellation line.

- The number of programs offered in 2016 has increased 350% from 2009.
- The evaluation system includes the development of surveys for programs, the extraction of information from registration forms, the development of a Program spreadsheet, the development of a Program/Event Worksheet and an Annual Report to fully evaluate the program.
 - Surveys are offered as a measuring tool and are used to evaluate communication received from the P&R Office; provide a class/program rating, share if the instructor was knowledgeable in his/her craft, identify if the participant had fun, or if the program provided for the development of skills to the next level, provide program statistics, offer information on adequacy of facility used, and share if the participant would consider joining the program again.
 - Registration forms provide information on residency vs. non, gender, grade, and age that can be included in the Annual Report.
 - Program spreadsheets are prepared for each program event and provide information on the number of participants, program fee, program revenue and expenses, SAP dollars received and volunteers (over 125 in 2016) for the Annual Report. This spreadsheet is maintained throughout the program to ensure that expenses don't exceed the amount of revenue taken in.

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- The Annual Report is a compilation of each programs name using figures extracted from the registration form, program spreadsheets and sometimes survey results.
- A background check system has been put into place with the cooperation of the State of Michigan Police. The iCHAT background check is run annually on each volunteer for Parks & Recreation programs. Utilizing the guidelines provided in the Parks & Recreation handbook, it is determined if the volunteer is qualified. This is a free program to the Township.
- The youth Scholarship Assistance Program fund has been developed which allows qualifying youth to participate in Parks & Recreation programs at a reduced rate. This fund is provided by the generosity of others through donations and grants.
- Procedures were developed for each reoccurring program/event and can be found in a Document file.
- A filter housing has been added to the water pipe system in Wiswasser Park allowing for the chlorination of the system to take place at the pipes rather than at the well. (Note: Chlorination at the well became a \$200.00 expense per occurrence annually to the Township however with this new Chlorine Injector system the township will still only have the expenses of water testing strips, chlorine, and the transportation of monthly water testing to the DEQ.
- Using the 2013-2018 5 Year Recreation Plan as a guide, park improvements have been made.
- The Program/Event Worksheet form is used to identify the following:
 - **Type of program** (recreational, educational, environmental, informational – sports, social, arts, cultural – adult, youth, family)
 - **Benefit to the Community** (social, economic, environmental, individual, promotes a healthy lifestyle, strengthening community image and sense of place, protecting environmental resources, fosters human development, strengthens safety & security, supports economic development, increases/promotes health and wellness, provides a social/environmental/economic/individual benefit, cultural unity).
 - **Program Objectives & How it will be Measured** (program was fun, program provided a qualified program coordinator/instructor/coach, program provided for the development of skills to move onto the next level, program rating, participant felt well informed throughout the season, participant would consider registering again, program rating of the facility used, and the participant would encourage others to join) – all measured through a survey offered at the end of the season or class. The assessment is sometimes done through the program coordinator by fielding questions at the end of the program.
 - **Program Financials** [number of participants, (includes those in attendance vs. those registered)], program revenue, program expenses and program wages].
 - **Planning Checklist** (provides a list of duties to perform for the program from steps to follow to 17 ideas of where to advertise the program/event).
 - **Achievement of Program Objectives** provides a space to note which Program Objective was assessed and if the Objective was achieved.

- **Volunteers For this Program** section provides a space to list anyone who assisted with the program and was not paid for their services (i.e. coach, program coordinator, instructor, etc.). This section is used for the annual Volunteer Thank You gathering.
- **Comments/Changes** for subsequent offerings provide a space to make a quick reference when planning a repeat of the program/event.
- When there is a change to a program or event, information is posted on the Parks & Recreation website as well as on the cancellation phone line (641-5168).

PARKS

(Items in red are offered as suggestions only.)

Since 2009, the **V. Jack Wiswasser Park** has seen significant changes. A 24'x48' pavilion has been added and with the award of a DNR grant a barrier free playground, modern restrooms, a drinking fountain, benches, ADA accessible sidewalks, and signage have been added. Donated bike racks were also installed in 2016. 2017 will offer us the opportunity to sanitize our water system at the pipes rather than at the well. This new system will pay for itself in 2 years and make the process simpler and quicker to sanitize our pipes in preparation for the summer season. This park was recognized with a Michigan Award in 2015 from the State of Michigan, Keep Michigan Beautiful Committee. This award is given for outstanding effort in furthering the goals of KMB (exterior projects that involved environmental clean-up, historical preservation, site beautification and restoration, and environmental educational programs for children and adults). KMB is the official state organization on beautification. **In the 5 Year Recreation Plan 2017-2021 a system to address drainage issues may need to be identified where water draining onto the poured in place and down the sidewalk is eliminated, soft spots in the poured in place are repaired (ongoing), and a new surface for parking is added.**

Rickard Boat Launch has added an ADA compliant picnic table. This site continues to be challenged by the muskrats that are tunneling in the banks after the water level was raised. **The 5 Year Recreation Plan 2017-2021 could identify a way to upgrade the launch site, add a seawall and reconfigure the parking lot to include more spaces and provide for ease of access.**

The **Park Lake Beach** has been upgraded with the assistance of a grant received from the Capital Area Community Foundation. The removal of an old, tired tin shelter was replaced by a beautiful ADA compliant pavilion, grill, picnic tables and sidewalk. Donated bike racks, a fishing dock, and new sand have upgraded the beach. The beach has been extended east to west to replace beach lost by the higher water levels. A newly constructed fishing dock has been added for anglers and those interested in resting along the lakeshore. **The 5 Year Recreation Plan 2017-2021 may include drainage for the parking area as well as a new parking surface and defining park boundaries.**

The **Bath Township Soccer Park** has added bike racks, and updated the roofs on both buildings on site with a volunteer labor donation from the Clinton County RESA Building Trades I classes. The current 5 Year Recreation Plan identifies the addition of a modern restroom and drinking fountain. After further discussion with those visiting Soccer Fields, most fields offer a port-a-potty and no drinking water. **The 5 Year Recreation Plan 2017-2021 may need to include a replacement for the retention wall that borders the parking lot.**

James Couzens Memorial Park has played host to Summer Park Activities and the Farmer's Market. (Due to declining numbers in the Summer Park Activities participants in the past 2 years the program will be modified in 2017.) In the summer of 2016 a new roof was constructed on the pavilion as labor was once again donated by the Clinton County RESA Building Trades II students. This park was recognized with a Distinguished Service Award in 2014 from the State of Michigan, Keep Michigan Beautiful Committee. This award is presented to those who have contributed to the beauty and clean environment of our state through varied programs and activities. **The 5 Year Recreation Plan 2017-2021 may include the installation of new ADA compliant sidewalks, lighting and a parking lot upgrade, and a modern restroom.**

Yet to be developed is **Upton Road Park**. Some residents have voiced their opinion and would like to see Baseball/Softball fields on this site as well as an official size soccer field. Currently the T-ball and Little Sluggers baseball programs utilize a baseball field at the school with the understanding that the Township will maintain it while using it. So far, this system is working for Township programs. However upper level baseball and softball clubs would like to see the development of fields to be rented out. This type of development would have the additional cost of field maintenance, equipment, modern restrooms and a non-potable water source. This park might also include a Bicycle Park and a staging area. The staging area would provide for connectivity to a non-motorized path by connecting to the Lake Drive bicycle path in Haslett. This access area would provide bikers and hikers access to the Greater Lansing Area. **The 5 Year Recreation Plan 2017-2021 may include the development of a youth Bicycle Park, a staging area for hikers and bikers, along with baseball/softball fields.**

The **Fletcher-Robson Nature Park** remains untouched other than general maintenance. Walking paths in this Nature Park allow visitors to walk within its boundaries in the summer and provides for winter cross country skiers. Some dog walkers chose to use this park but this park receives limited traffic. In 2016, new directional park signs were added that indicate path distances. As a 20 acre extension of the Rose Lake State Wildlife Area located kitty-corner to State property, this park allows for a smaller more private setting to visit where hunting is not allowed. **The 5 Year Recreation Plan 2017-2021 may identify a parking area near the road.**

The **Park Lake Preserve** has not seen development. **The 5 Year Recreation Plan may include a walking path, viewing tower, and a kayak launch, along with water trails.**

Accomplishments 2009-2016

Grants Received

\$1,200.00 Grant - Joe D. Pentecost Foundation for the Development and Administration of the youth Scholarship Assistance Program fund.

\$6,000.00 Grant - Capital Area Community Foundation towards the pavilion at the Park Lake Beach.

Honors

Keep Michigan Beautiful Award for James Couzens Memorial Park
Keep Michigan Beautiful Award for V. Jack Wiswasser Park

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Memberships

Southern Michigan Recreation and Parks Association
Michigan Recreation and Parks Association

Certifications

Food Safety Manager
Chauffeurs License
First Aid/CPR/AED Certification

Development & Accomplishments

Background check for volunteers/coaches/instructors (iCHAT).
Development and maintenance of a youth Scholarship Assistance Program fund (SAP).
Procedures for each program/event.
Surveys for programs/events.
Evaluation system for programs using Program/Event worksheet.
Spreadsheet for all programs/events.
Procedures and administration of a water testing system for Wiswasser Park.
Instrumental in the installation of a Chlorine Injector for the water system in Wiswasser Park.
Worked with DPW for the building of a fishing dock at the Park Lake Beach.
Agreement with the Clinton County RESA Building Trades class to construct a pavilion at Wiswasser Park.
Sole administrator for the Parks & Recreation pages of the website.
Sole administrator for the Parks & Recreation Cancellation Phone line.
Play an active role in the Budget Process.
Maintain P&R Information on 2 Marquees.
Foster a working relationship with the Bath Girl Scouts to plant and maintained the flowers in James Couzens Memorial Park annually.
Foster a relationship with the Bath Community Schools.
Development of a parent email list for those interested in receiving P&R Information.
Provide Facebook submissions for P&R programs/events.
Development of School Newsletters for the Friday Folders.
The increase of program and event offerings.
Some parks have seen improvements.

Our two biggest assets continue to be volunteers and the Bath Community School family. Without their support, we would not be able to offer numerous programs/events. The school provides athletic fields and facilities (gyms, cafeteria, and parking space) and volunteers act as unpaid employees as coaches, assistants, site directors, instructors, etc. The effort to continue to work together for the best possible experience of our residents is crucial. Neither can be thanked enough.

Meijer continues to be our largest financial supporter donating \$500.00-\$1,000.00 annually. Their donations have been used to enhance events and in one instance offer an educational program.

Plans for 2017 include an update of the Procedures Manual, an update of the Parks & Recreation Handbook, and to assist where needed for development and instituting of projects identified in the 2018-2022 Parks & Recreation 5 Year Recreation Plan (as time permits). Social media opportunities will continue to be explored. New programs/events will continue to be offered as others are eliminated.

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A lot of time and effort is put into registration from preparing the forms, to entering registration information multiple times, and typing rosters by extracting information. Thank you for the approval to purchase an online registration system. My hope is that this system will free up some of my time so new programs can be offered without the elimination of others.

Needs/Wants

Addition of 2 electronic signs
Survey for all parks
Financial investment in parks
Reconfiguration of the BCC or a new larger facility
Direction for Parks & Recreation
A temperature controlled storage facility free of rodents for equipment

In Conclusion

In this one person department, 25 new programs/events have been developed and offered in the past 7 years which now total over 40 per year. The services of over 125 volunteers are needed to keep programs running. For the past 1.5 years the 32 hour work week is consumed with identifying, developing, promoting, supervising and evaluating programs and events, working with volunteers, identifying and hiring instructors, coordinators and coaches; maintaining equipment needed for programs, developing and running public events, maintaining the Parks & Recreation pages of the Bath Township website, soliciting for donations, preparing forms for programs/events, advertising programs/events, maintaining the youth Scholarship Assistance Program fund, monitoring expenditures, submitting to, planning and reviewing the department budget, attending meetings/conference, fostering partnerships, implementing all applicable laws, rules and regulations/standards pertaining to the recreation industry, and assisting in the process of and implementation of the 5 Year Recreation Plan. Parks and Recreation also continues to accept funds through the generosity of others for implementing the youth Scholarship Assistance Program fund to assist families financially in Parks & Recreation programs.

The Future of Bath Township Parks & Recreation?

Since 2009 the primary focus has been on programming. As a new board, what do you see as a direction for Parks & Recreation? Will the Parks & Recreation Department continue to exist? Does the BOT have an interest in upgrading Parks and if so, what does that plan look like and what will the Director's involvement be? Will the Parks & Recreation budget remain intact or will it change?