



Catching the

Winds of Change

2011
ANNUAL REPORT



Through the dedication, enthusiasm and cooperative efforts of the Michigan Recreation and Park Association board, staff and members, we have weathered change for the better and renewed our commitment to serving the parks and recreation profession. To celebrate the achievements of our Association during the past year, MRPA is highlighting where we've been and where we are headed in this inaugural annual report.

In 2011, MRPA welcomed a new chief operating officer, many new board members and additional staff who are all committed to refreshing our services, reputation and overall status as a premier trade association.

In September, the MRPA Leadership Team met for the Annual Board Retreat on Mackinac Island to discuss the vision and future of the Association. The retreat, facilitated by new MRPA partner, the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI), yielded an Action Plan that will guide future efforts of the Association.

The MRPA Action Plan has five main Priority Areas –

each includes multiple measurable strategies for implementation. The five Priority Areas are:

1. MRPA as a Resource to Members and the General Public
2. MRPA as Advocates and Educators
3. Expanding and Engaging Membership
4. MRPA and its Membership as Placemakers
5. Evaluating Infrastructure and Fiscal Sustainability

We plan to enhance and expand services for all Association members and we need to share the message that parks and recreation contributes to quality of life at the local, state and national levels. Our new Action Plan will provide the direction, activities and measurable outcomes to ensure our success in these endeavors.

As I reflect on my time as MRPA's president, I realize what an exciting year we have had in terms of the growth of our organization. I truly appreciate the opportunity I have had to connect with members on both professional and personal levels, and I look forward to seeing what the future holds for MRPA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Wells". The signature is stylized and includes a large, looping flourish at the end.

Sue Wells
MRPA President
Oakland County Parks and Recreation

From the

Chief Operating Officer



The **winds of change** are everywhere in our great state, and those winds have changed the dark clouds of the past to the fresh air of the future. Yes, it has been a challenging few years for the parks and recreation profession and your association, but we have survived and each day we are taking steps to bright future filled with hope.

Financially, for the first time in five years, MRPA ended 2011 in the black. As you can see from the full financial report on page 6, we're not totally out of the woods yet, but we're on our way. The three major sources of income for MRPA are membership dues, the Annual Conference and Trade Show and the Grand Experience travel program for residents ages 50+. These key areas of revenue were stabilized in 2011, and two of the three areas saw increases. Additional resources have been dedicated to maintain and grow those revenue streams.

More importantly, MRPA has aggressively sought new opportunities to diversify its revenue base and enhance member services. New initiatives that either have been or will be launched in the near future include Rec 101, Rec Connect, No Child Left Inside, the Municipal Golf Trail, and a phone application from Mousetrap Mobile, to name a few. Additionally, MRPA is expanding its member services to include discussion groups for directors, programmers and other special interest groups, providing some limited consulting services, creating a web-based resource center and is offering its members discounted insurance for home and auto.

2011 saw MRPA create some new partnerships with MPHI, MUCC, MFF, DNR, MGIA, MFEA, MFMA, MSAE, MML, and a variety of other organizations with acronyms. MRPA now has a seat at the table with Michigan DNR's Accessibility Advisory Council and the State of Michigan's Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) for Natural Resources. The Public Policy Committee hosted its first day on the capital and 87 members of the State House of Representatives co-sponsored a resolution presented by Representative Phil Cavanaugh in support of July as national Parks and Recreation Month.

The MRPA Foundation authorized funding for MRPA to hire a consultant to write grant proposals for funding research on the economic impact of Parks and Recreation in the State of Michigan. The proposals will be submitted to major funders and if successful will provide data that will demonstrate the value of parks and recreation in our state. Learn more about the MRPA Foundation on page 14.

MRPA has great employees who are very dedicated to its members. This year, two new faces joined the MRPA team. Travel Coordinator Karen Aune will oversee all MRPA travel programs, and Thomas Paden is dedicated to membership services and business development.

2011 was an exciting year but we know the best is yet to come. We are grateful for the opportunity to work for an association with members who are truly making a difference each and every day.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Conklin".

Ann Conklin
Chief Operating Officer
Michigan Recreation and Park Association

2011-
2012
MRPA

Leadership Team

MRPA Committees

President - Sue Wells
Oakland County Parks and Recreation

President Elect - Vic Chiasson
Eastern Michigan University

Past President - Linda Walter, CPRP
Clinton Township Parks and Recreation

Vice President - Jim Dunleavy
Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Vice President Elect - Marcella Post, CPRP
Midland Parks and Recreation

Treasurer - Kyle Langlois, CPRP, CYSA
Sterling Heights Parks and Recreation

Secretary - Troy Stowell, CYSA
Lansing Parks and Recreation

**State Representative Region 1 -
Charlie Ziesemer, CPRP**
Kentwood Parks and Recreation

**State Representative Region 2 -
Brett Kaschinske, CPRP**
Lansing Parks and Recreation

State Representative Region 3 - Scott Maher
Wayne County Parks

State Representative Region 4 - Scott Pratt, CYSA
Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

State Representative Region 5 - Chris Hardenbrook
City of Grosse Pointe

**State Representative Region 6 -
Jason Jones, CPRP**
Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation

MRPA Committees

Professional Committees

Aquatics - Jamie Freese, Chair
Livonia Parks and Recreation

Athletics - Mike Henegar, Chair
Dearborn Heights Parks and Recreation

Diverse Cultures - Alicia Minter, Chair
City of Detroit Recreation

Directors - Derek Smith, CPRP, Chair
Southeastern Livingston County Recreation Authority

Park Resources - Jennifer Tucker, CPRP, Chair
Springfield Township Parks and Recreation

Past Presidents - Stu Alderman, CPRP, Chair
Neighborhood Club of Grosse Pointe

Programming - Jeanette Williams, CPRE, Chair
Canton Leisure Services

Public Policy - Tim McCaffrey, CPRP, Chair
East Lansing Parks, Recreation & Arts

Seniors - Becky Paquin, Chair
Oxford Township Parks and Recreation

Students - Brandy Boyd, Chair
Rochester Avon Recreation Authority

Student Representative - Kelly Marcaccio
Central Michigan University

**Therapeutic Recreation - Joan Lenhard, MS, CTRS,
Chair** TR Specialist

**Trails, Greenways, Blueways & Open Spaces -
Anita Twardesky, Chair**
Riverside Kayak Connection

Operational Committees

Awards - Kae Eidson, CPRP, Chair
Grand Blanc Parks and Recreation

Certification - Al Ellard, CPRP, Chair
Central Michigan University

Marketing & Membership
Sean Fletcher, CPRP - Co-Chair
Canton Leisure Services

Drew Burns - Co-Chair
Van Buren Township Parks and Recreation

**Professional Development - Lori Irwin, CPRP,
Chair** Central Michigan University

Scholarship - April Heier, CPRP, Chair
Farmington Hills Special Services

Youth & Teen Initiatives - Karla Williamson, Chair
City of Detroit Recreation

MRPA Regional Associations

Northeast Parks and Recreation Association
Liz Kaczmarek, CPRP, President
Clinton Township Parks and Recreation

Northern Michigan Parks and Recreation Association
Stephanie Wirtz, President
Saginaw County Parks and Recreation

Northwest Parks and Recreation Association
Cristin Spiller, President
Oak Park Recreation

Southern Michigan Recreation and Park Association
Angela Dove, President
Haslett Community Education

Southwest Metropolitan Recreation
Executive Group - Amy Walker, President
Livonia Parks and Recreation

West Michigan Recreation and Park Association
Kenneth Westrate, Jr., President
Wyoming Parks and Recreation

MRPA Foundation Board of Directors

President - Ron Olson, CPRP
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

President Elect - Tim Schreiner, CPRP
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Secretary - Pamela Kirbach, CPRP
Kirbach Consultancy

**MRPA Past President Representative -
Linda Walter, CPRP**
Clinton Township Parks and Recreation

Cory Anderson Vortex International Aquatics

Julie Bouma Oak Crest Manors of Jenison

Phil Castonia, CPRP
Oakland County Parks and Recreation

Ron Davis Oxford Twp Parks & Recreation

Mike Engan
Engan-Tooley-Doyle and Associates (Retired)

Scott Mercer Troy Recreation

Membership

Why does MRPA exist?

In order to promote the parks and recreation profession. To provide resources and programs and to advocate for important legislation. For networking and professional development. The answers to this question are many, but it all boils down to this: The Michigan Recreation and Park Association exists to serve you – our members.

MRPA has represented Michigan's parks and recreation professionals, agencies, advocates and vendors since 1935. From a rural singular park to the State of Michigan's Department of Natural Resources, we exist to provide members the tools needed to tell your parks and recreation story and the resources to provide impactful, efficient leisure services to your community.

The parks and recreation industry and MRPA have faced a variety of challenges in recent years – cuts to statewide revenue-sharing funds, a downturned economy, changes in leadership, and the constant challenge to justify the services of parks and recreation providers, to name just a few.

Yet the opportunities for parks and recreation, and for your Association, are many. Scientific research and economic studies continue to confirm what we already know – that the services provided by park and recreation departments create vibrant places and contribute to the future of a prosperous Michigan.

In 2011, MRPA welcomed a new Chief Operating Officer and renewed our commitment to refreshing our programs, reputation, and overall status as the premier trade association for Michigan's parks and recreation professionals. Most importantly, MRPA has restored our commitment and focus on you – our members.

The value of parks and recreation is undeniable, and in the coming year, MRPA will provide you the resources and tools you'll need to tell your department's park and recreation story. We're revamping our services and enhancing our program offerings to best serve you. 2012 marks a new beginning for MRPA. We look forward to working together to make 2012 a great year for parks, recreation and leisure services statewide.



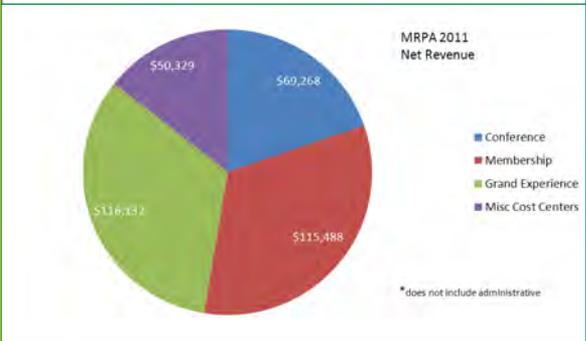
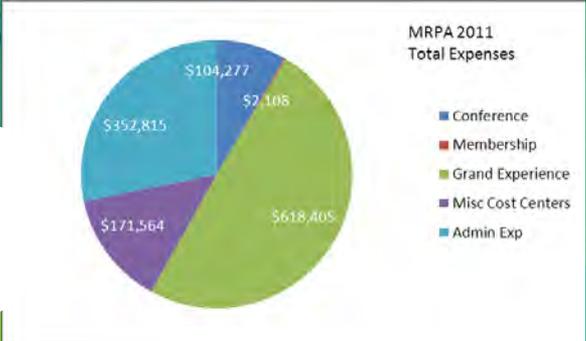
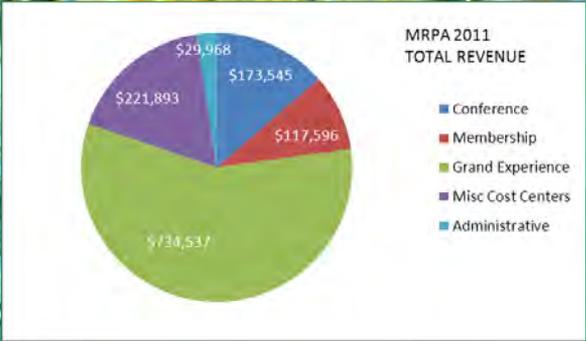
MRPA welcomed Business Development & Membership Services Coordinator Thomas Paden to the MRPA team in November 2011. The Association is dedicated to enhancing benefits for all MRPA members; Thomas' energy and enthusiasm will help MRPA provide our membership with the tools, services and resources to share their parks and recreation story in 2012.

Financial Reports

Fiscal Sustainability – Doing More with Less

MRPA has faced significant challenges in recent years. Members have weathered unprecedented attacks on statewide revenue sharing, accompanied by deep cuts to community services and department budgets. The resounding call to do more with less has had a direct impact on Association membership.

MRPA has also withstood changes in staff leadership, a struggling economy and a changing industry landscape. Yet despite these challenges, 2011 has seen a newly stabilized MRPA. For the first time since 2006, the Association ended the year with annual revenue that exceeded the year's expenditures. Despite hiring three staff to address key areas and making much-needed investments in technology, MRPA was able to maintain the lowest total of annual administrative expenses in more than a decade.



Strategic Plan



Strategic Planning: Valuing the Past, Understanding the Present and Envisioning the Future

In 2011, MRPA welcomed a new Chief Operating Officer and a commitment to refresh the Association's programs, reputation and overall status as the premier trade association for Michigan's park, recreation and leisure service professionals.

The Association leadership was interested in a new vision for the organization, and needed a third-person agency to guide the strategic planning process. The Michigan Public Health Institute, MRPA's neighbor and now active partner organization, answered the call to facilitate the Association's strategic planning exercises. In October, Board Members and key stakeholders met at Mackinac Island's Grand Hotel to identify new priorities for MRPA.

To "set the stage" and provide context regarding the role of parks and recreation in the overall economy and quality of life of Michigan residents, a member of Michigan Municipal League leadership was invited to deliver the "big picture" view of the value of Parks and Recreation. Three days of focused planning and prioritizing followed.

The strategic planning process, from pre-meetings with process facilitators to the Planning Retreat in October and the action planning seminars during the November and December Association Board Meetings, yielded a comprehensive three-year strategic plan with a new logic model, five main priorities and 13 measurable strategies for success.

Interested in learning more or viewing the MRPA Strategic Action Plan?
Visit www.mrpaonline.org/AboutMRPA/Board.aspx

Travel Programs -

Creating Memories for Participants and Funding for MRPA Services.

Providing a Grand Experience

In 1967, MRPA hosted the first "Senior Get-Together" at Grand Hotel – the trip drew 25 participants and established a senior program that has traveled to Mackinac Island ever since. Now known as the MRPA Grand Experience, the all-inclusive package provides participants ages 50+ the opportunity to enjoy the splendor of Grand Hotel and the scenic beauty of Mackinac Island at greatly reduced prices during the fall season.

The Grand Experience has allowed Grand Hotel to remain open longer into the travel season and has also provided much-needed revenue for the Association. In fact, the program has historically provided more than one-third of MRPA's annual operating budget.

In 2011, more than 1,300 seniors from across Michigan (and even neighboring states) joined MRPA for one of four Grand Experience trips. The 2011 program provided more than \$116,000 for Association operations and marked the first increase in traveler participation since 2002. Thank you to the 35 member agencies that provided a Grand Experience to their residents in 2011.

In October, R.D. Musser and Dan Musser, III, owners of Grand Hotel, were inducted into the MRPA Hall of Fame, in honor of their tremendous support of the Association. Thank you to partner Grand Hotel and the Musser Family for hosting the Grand Experience and other MRPA travel opportunities including Spring Fling, Late Summer Holiday and the Jazzy Walk Weekend. Your generosity provides unique opportunities for travelers and funding to support our mission.

Resources to Grow the Program

The Grand Experience is a key component of MRPA services and operations. MRPA is committed to providing the resources and staff to ensure the program and partnership with Grand Hotel continues well into the future.

The Association is thrilled to welcome MRPA Travel Coordinator Karen Aune to the team! Karen's experience in hospitality and the resort industry, as well as her background in commercial recreation have made her a perfect fit for the Grand Experience.

In 2012, the Association will celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Grand Hotel and the 45th Anniversary of the MRPA Grand Experience. We look forward to many more years of programs and partnership to come.



In 2011, MRPA bid farewell to Grand Experience Trip Coordinator Mary Winegar. A longtime MRPA member, leader, volunteer and Trip Coordinator, Mary has worn many hats when it came to service to the organization. Thank you for all that you have done for the program and for MRPA. We wish you a very happy retirement!



District 17 Constituents Scott Maher (Wayne County Parks, far left) and Kenneth Grybel (Dearborn Heights Parks & Recreation, second from left), then MRPA President Linda Walter (Clinton Township Parks and Recreation, second from right) and then President Elect Sue Wells (Oakland County Parks and Recreation, far right) took a moment during the 2011 MRPA Legislative Luncheon to take a photo with District 17 State Representative Phil Cavanaugh (center).

Cavanaugh introduced House Resolution 103 naming July 2011 Parks and Recreation Month in Michigan; the resolution was signed by 87 co-sponsors.

Public Policy Committee

Throughout 2011, the MRPA Public Policy Committee monitored and reviewed legislative bills that would affect parks, recreation and trails in Michigan, sending action alerts and contacting legislators as needed. Members of the committee represented the Association at meetings of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Commission, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources State Parks Committee and the Michigan State Parks & Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel.

July is Parks and Recreation Month in Michigan

MRPA hosted a legislative luncheon to celebrate July as Parks and Recreation Month on June 21, 2011 at the Michigan State Capitol. The event provided Association members the opportunity to discuss the value of parks, recreation and leisure services with Michigan legislators. Following lunch, MRPA representatives attended the introduction and unanimous adoption of House Resolution 103, declaring July 2011 Parks and Recreation Month in Michigan. When all was said and done, HR103 garnered 87 co-sponsors in the Michigan House of Representatives.

Thank you to all MRPA members who participated in this event and the MRPA Foundation Board, who generously sponsored the MRPA Legislative Luncheon. A big thank you also goes to State Representative Phil Cavanaugh and his staff. Representative Cavanaugh was the lead sponsor of HR103 and took an active role in recruiting additional sponsors and supporters.

The Association plans to build on the success of the 2011 Legislative Luncheon with a Parks and Recreation Advocacy Day. Join MRPA and partners including the Michigan DNR and the No Child Left Inside Coalition on June 19, 2012 as we share the parks and recreation story and celebrate July as Parks and Recreation Month. Events include a legislative luncheon, free activities for your day campers on the Capitol Lawn and meetings with legislators, where you can share the measurable impact of parks and recreation. Learn more at www.mrpaonline.org/advocacy.aspx.

Athletic Events

Providing Affordable Opportunities for Sports, Recreation and Physical Activity

Recreation – it's what our industry is all about. MRPA members are committed to creating affordable recreation opportunities to Michigan residents. In turn, the Association prides itself on providing low-cost packaged programs, through which local departments can promote physical activity for youth and adults alike. Visit www.mrpaonline.org/programs.aspx to learn more about MRPA Programs today.

Adult Sport Tournaments

In 2011, 78 teams from 30 Michigan communities participated in the MRPA State Volleyball Tournament; a total of more than 500 adult volleyball players participated in the winter tournament. More than 200 participants from 28 communities (40 teams total) participated in the 2011 MRPA Basketball Tournaments. Congratulations to all Volleyball and Basketball State League Champions!

Youth Athletic Programs

MRPA's youth athletic programs foster friendly competition, sportsmanship and a love of physical activity. The programs are administered by MRPA on a statewide level, with community parks and recreation entities hosting qualifying events on the local level. Participation is free for participants, and programs are affordable for members, with just a nominal administrative fee.

The Punt, Pass & Kick (PPK) program is a youth football skills competition combining punting, passing and place-kicking. More than 41 communities hosted local qualifying PPK events in 2011, providing more than 1,200 youth athletes access to the PPK program. 40 youth participants advanced to the state championships, held during halftime at a Detroit Lions home game. Katilyn Rahilly, age 9, of Newberry, traveled to Baltimore to compete in the National Finals on January 14.

More than 1,600 youth participants from 34 Michigan communities competed in the 2011 Hershey's Track & Field program; 506 qualifying athletes competed in the Michigan State Finals, hosted by MRPA, in hopes of earning a trip to the North American Finals. In the end, six youth athletes represented Michigan at the North American Finals in Hershey, Pennsylvania in August.

Pitch, Hit and Run (PHR) is a youth baseball skills competition. In 2011, 79 Michigan communities hosted PHR events, and more than 1,500 athletes took a swing at the program. 24 participants qualified for the state finals event, where Tyler Brooks, age 13, of Canton qualified for the National Finals event in Phoenix.

Walk Michigan

The Walk Michigan program aims to provide group walks, to encourage residents to enjoy their local parks, recreation facilities and trails. 22 member agencies participated in the Walk Michigan program in 2011. On Labor Day weekend, 118 Michigan residents joined MRPA for the Walk Michigan weekend at Mission Point Resort. A variety of activities led up to the grand finale: the Mackinac Bridge Labor

Day walk. Governor Rick Synder was on hand to congratulate attendees following the walk across the Mighty Mac during the Walk Michigan brunch, and a good time was had by all!





Olympian Carl Lewis shares some pointers with Hershey's Track and Field North American Finalist Madison Eaton, age 10, of Lake Orion, Michigan.



Punt, Pass and Kick State Finalists take a break from the action during the Detroit Lions home game on December 11, 2011.



Tyler Brooks, of Canton, topped a competitive field which started with 650,000 players nationwide and 4,000 North American competitions to get to the Pitch, Hit and Run National Finals.

MRPA *at the Table*



The MRPA Leadership Team and staff aggressively sought new partnerships and representation within key regulatory bodies in 2011.

MRPA now enjoys a seat at the table on the Michigan DNR's Accessibility Advisory Council and the Natural Resources Advisory Rules Committee, within the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs' Office of Regulatory Reform. MRPA members have also represented the Association at meetings of the Natural Resources Trust Fund Commission and on the Michigan State Parks & Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel.

The Association has fostered new (and in some cases, renewed) partnerships with various organizations including:

Land Information Access Association
Michigan Association of Senior Centers
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Michigan Farmers Market Association
Michigan Festivals and Events Association
Michigan Fitness Foundation

Michigan Green Industry Association
Michigan Municipal League
Michigan No Child Left Inside Coalition
Michigan Public Health Institute
Michigan Senior Olympics
Michigan United Conservation Clubs

Outcomes of partnerships include cross-promotion of events and services, booth and session trades at organization conferences and trade shows, sponsorships, joint programming opportunities and more.

MRPA Committees in Action

MRPA's dedicated committee volunteers bring a variety of education and training opportunities to the membership, including the Aquatic Facility Operator's Course & Exam, the National Playground Safety Institute, the Michigan Trails Summit, events for park resource and maintenance employees, and the MRPA Therapeutic Recreation Institute. More than 100 sessions and training events are approved for Continuing Education Units towards the CPRP designation each year. A complete list of MRPA Committees can be found on page 4. Thank you for all that you do!



Conference



The 2011 Conference & Trade Show: Connecting Professionals

In February, 266 parks and recreation practitioners made the trip to the Grand Traverse Resort for the Annual Conference & Trade Show – MRPA’s signature education event. The event’s 58 sessions, keynote speakers and multiple networking events

provided attendees with a variety of unique professional development opportunities.

Vendors representing 75 businesses and organizations participated in the 2011 event, packing the Trade Show Exhibit Hall with the latest and greatest products and services for the parks, recreation and leisure services industry. An additional 65 individuals attended the third annual Michigan Trails Summit, which was held as a Pre-Conference session.

The Annual Conference and Trade Show is one of three main revenue streams for the Association; the 2011 event provided more than \$173,000 to support MRPA operations. Nearly \$33,000 in sponsorship and advertising dollars was secured to help fund the 2011 Conference & Trade Show, an increase of more than \$3,000 from 2010.

MRPA relies on a variety of partners to ensure that the Annual Conference & Trade Show is a success – thank you to the dedicated 2011 Conference Committee, as well as all event volunteers, sponsors, attendees and exhibitors.

The Changing Face of the MRPA Conference & Trade Show

Planning for the Annual Conference & Trade Show typically spans at least a year in advance. As the Conference Committee contemplated the theme and offerings for 2012, a variety of changes were made to the framework of the annual event.

The Aquatic Facility Operator Certification Course and Exam, the National Playground Safety Institute (Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course and Exam) and the Therapeutic Recreation Institute, previously separate education and training events hosted by MRPA, have been added to the Conference & Trade Show lineup as Pre-Conference events.

To allow for increased investment in educational session speakers and presenters, the 2012 Conference will not include an opening session with a keynote speaker. In addition, the new format allows two days for Pre-Conference sessions, with Conference & Trade Show content condensed into three days. The new format provides enhanced education opportunities, while minimizing the time attendees must spend away from the office.



Save the date for the following Conference & Trade Show dates:

February 24- March 1, 2013
Radisson Lansing and the Lansing Center

February 3-7, 2014
Hyatt Regency Dearborn

February 9-13, 2015
Radisson Lansing and the Lansing Center



In 2011, MRPAF provided 19 professional development scholarships to parks and recreation professionals in Michigan; the total scholarship amount awarded in 2011 was \$8,750. The Foundation also funded the 2011 Legislative Luncheon (see page 9 for details).

Each fall, MRPA member Ron Davis hosts a golf outing in memory of his father, Raymond C. Davis, Sr. Since 2007, Davis has donated the proceeds of the outing to benefit the MRPA Foundation; the Raymond C. Davis, Sr. Access to Recreation Fund was named in honor of his generous lead gift. In 2011, the Davis Memorial Golf Outing and Foundation fundraising at the 2011 Conference & Trade Show earned nearly \$10,000 for the MRPA Foundation.

In December 2011, a \$10,000 anonymous donation was made to the Raymond C. Davis, Sr. Access to Recreation Fund. The Access Fund will provide matching grants to support local community efforts to purchase adaptive equipment and to build accessible recreation venues across Michigan. The Michigan Recreation and Park Association and the MRPA Foundation extend their gratitude to all individuals who have contributed to the Access to Recreation Fund, including this year's generous anonymous donor.

Funding for Our Future: Parks and Recreation Economic Impact Study

The parks and recreation industry has faced unprecedented challenges during the past several years. As local municipalities face current and future economic realities that will ultimately change the delivery of public services, many parks and recreation departments across Michigan face severe cutbacks and in some instances, elimination.

Intrinsically, we know that parks and recreation matters. We know that vibrant successful communities have great places for people to gather, have strong programs that keep residents engaged and involved; and, have preserved open space. We can demonstrate the value of parks and recreation programs with afterschool programs that keep our children safe and off the street, with programs and activities that keep our communities healthy, and with centers that keep our seniors active and independent. Yes, we all know these components create healthy, economically strong communities, but can we prove it?

While there are some communities that have strong data, there is no reliable comprehensive source that demonstrates the economic impact of Parks and Recreation in Michigan. In 2011, the MRPA Foundation authorized funding for a grant writer to pursue a major grant for a comprehensive parks and recreation economic impact study that aims to address this problem. The study will provide comprehensive data that will demonstrate the economic impact of parks and recreation at the local, county, regional and state level, and will provide will serve as a tool to tell the parks and recreation story. Stay tuned for more information as this project progresses in 2012.

Learn more about the Foundation at www.mrpafoundation.org.

THE MRPA *Scholarship Committee*

The MRPA Scholarship Committee raised nearly \$7,000 in 2011 to go towards scholarships for undergraduate students pursuing careers in parks and recreation at Michigan colleges and universities. Funds were raised through the Annual MRPA Scholarship Golf Outing and activities at the 2011 Conference & Trade Show (scholarship socials, raffles and prize drawings). The Committee awarded 10 student scholarships in 2011, a value of \$11,000.



Youth and Teen Initiatives

The MRPA Youth and Teen Initiatives Committee connects Michigan's youth council members with local government leaders to share ideas through statewide youth & teen initiatives. In 2011, the Committee hosted teen councils from across the state at the Michigan Youth Symposium and fostered the connection between MRPA and the No Child Left Inside Coalition (details of this new partnership can be found on page 18).



Ticket Programs:



MRPA Ticket Programs: Providing Routes to Revenue

For more than four decades, MRPA has provided members with the opportunity to participate in ticket consignment programs for amusement park venues. With partners including Cedar Point, Michigan's Adventure, the Michigan Renaissance Festival, Oakland County Waterparks and the Detroit Zoo, the program has provided more than \$2.1 million to support Association operations and more than \$815,000 in revenue to member agencies since its inception.

How it Works

MRPA Ticket Programs are free for members! Tickets are sold on a consignment basis, meaning that the program is virtually no-risk. Residents receive discount tickets, and participating agencies receive cash back on each ticket sold.

In 2011, more than 28,000 tickets were sold through the MRPA Amusement Park Ticket Program, providing more than \$22,000 to support Association operations and \$13,000 in agency commissions.

Expanding the Program and Streamlining Administration

In recent years, MRPA has been able to expand the ticket program to include the Detroit Pistons and Red Wings, the Detroit Zoo and the Lansing Lugnuts. These additional programs allow tickets to be purchased online, making sales easier for agencies and residents alike. Thank you to the 35 communities who participated in Detroit Zoo, Pistons, Red Wings and Lansing Lugnuts programs, providing discounted tickets to residents, earning revenue for their agencies and supporting the services of MRPA. Thank you also to all 2011 Ticket Program partners.

Visit
[www.mrpaonline.org/
programs.aspx](http://www.mrpaonline.org/programs.aspx)
to learn more.



Honoring Excellence: MRPA Awards

The Michigan Recreation and Park Association honors exemplary park and recreation professionals, organizations and citizen advocates through the Association's various awards.

Annual Awards

MRPA honors park and recreation professionals, departments, programs and projects through the Association's annual awards, presented each year during the Association's largest event – the MRPA Conference & Trade Show.

MRPA awarded six awards to individual professionals, three design awards, four organizational awards, six Marketing Awards, two Therapeutic Recreation Awards and six awards for elected officials at the 2011 Conference & Trade Show in Traverse City.

Community Service

MRPA's Community Service Awards recognize individuals and groups who show outstanding support to public recreation and park programs in their community, including friends groups, department volunteers and citizen advocates. Categories include Community Service, Youth Sports Coach and Volunteer of the Year, and the Margaret Whitehead Senior of the Year.

MRPA honored 31 individuals and organizations from 23 Michigan communities with a MRPA Community Service Award in 2011.

Thank you to the 12-member MRPA Awards Committee for your work in soliciting nominations and planning award ceremonies for the MRPA Annual and Community Service Awards.



MRPA Hall of Fame

2011 was a special year for MRPA awards; a new class was inducted to the Association's Hall of Fame during a banquet and induction ceremony held in October.

The MRPA Hall of Fame provides recognition for professionals and special individuals who have made outstanding, unique, lasting, and extraordinary contributions though recreation and park services in Michigan. A new class is inducted to the MRPA Hall of Fame once every two years.

Thank you to the Hall of Fame Committee, event sponsors and attendees. The 2011 Hall of Fame Banquet and Induction Ceremony drew 160 attendees; more than double the attendance of the 2009 event. Learn more about the MRPA Hall of Fame at www.mrpaonline.org/HallofFame.aspx.

Congratulations to the MRPA Hall of Fame Class of 2011:



David "Bud" Brown



Rev. Hurley Coleman, Jr.



Michael R. Engan



Larry W. Fitch



Peter C. Harlow



Luther T. Holt, Jr.



R. Dan Musser & R. Dan Musser, III



Ralph A. Richard



Donald Sparpana

New Initiatives AND SERVICES

MRPA is committed to providing our membership with professional development opportunities, management resources and best practices, programs to engage residents and the resources and tools to tell your parks and recreation story.

In 2011, the Association embarked on the following new initiatives and member services. Stay tuned for updates in 2012!

Research to Justify Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services

To tell our state's Parks and Recreation story, MRPA and our member agencies need reliable, comprehensive data that demonstrates the impact of Parks and Recreation right here in Michigan. In 2011, the MRPA Foundation authorized funding for a grant writer to pursue a major grant for a comprehensive parks and recreation economic impact study that aims to address this challenge. Stay tuned for more information as the project progresses in 2012.

No Child Left Inside and 2012 Legislative Day

MRPA partnered with the Michigan No Child Left Inside Coalition in 2011. The Association has helped to create an enhanced website and communication devices for the initiative, and in 2012, MRPA will help lead the charge in getting Michigan youth outdoors. We will be calling on members to help promote the initiative, providing camera-ready ads for seasonal brochure, links for department websites and much, much more.

Join us June 19, 2012 at the Michigan State Capitol as we promote the No Child Left Inside Initiative and share the parks and recreation story. Bring your day campers for activities on the Capitol Lawn, participate in meetings with legislators and more. Visit www.mrpaonline.org/advocacy.aspx for details.

Directors Discussions

In October, MRPA launched an online knowledge sharing forum now known as the Director's Discussions. The service utilizes a weekly survey to provide timely resources to Michigan's parks and recreation directors and executive staff.

Access to the Director's Discussions is a benefit of MRPA membership – any member may submit a question for discussion or opt-in to be included in the weekly email and survey. MRPA is currently working to expand the service to other interest areas including programming, facilities and more. Visit www.mrpaonline.org/DirectorsDiscussions to learn more and subscribe today.

Professional Development Opportunities

MRPA is committed to providing valuable professional development opportunities for Michigan's parks and recreation providers. In September, more than 50 directors and executive staff members joined MRPA for the 2011 two-day Director's Summit. Due to the positive responses from the inaugural event, a follow-up Summit is scheduled for the 2012 Conference & Trade Show. Additional new development events are on the horizon – additional summits and seminars will be announced throughout the year.

Funding Guide for Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services

In 2011, MRPA partnered with the Land Information Access Association (LIAA) to develop a guidebook of parks and recreation funding sources, with a focus on recreation authorities. The book will be launched at the 2012 Conference & Trade Show, and information will also be available at www.mrpaonline.org. MRPA and LIAA representatives are available to visit local communities to discuss funding for parks, recreation and leisure services, as well as recreation authorities.



The Municipal Golf Trail

MRPA is committed to providing unique resources for all segments of the Parks and Recreation industry – including our municipal golf providers! In 2011, the Association developed a campaign promoting the benefits of municipal golf in Michigan. To highlight our state's municipal courses, the Municipal Golf Trail will be launched at the 2012 Conference & Trade Show, providing discounts and incentives to golfers who play municipal courses. Learn more about the Municipal Golf Trail, including details on how to register for the free program, at www.migolftrail.org.

Mobile Apps for Your Parks and Department

The Association partnered with Mousetrap Mobile to provide a mobile site for MRPA Conference & Trade Show attendees. The organizations have joined forces to provide unique mobile website and text alert opportunities for MRPA member departments and agencies. Stay tuned for more details in 2012!

Online Resource Center

The MRPA Online Resource Center is designed to equip members with parks and recreation research, information and best practices. From operations to dog parks, holiday programming to millages and everything in between, MRPA aims to create a one-stop knowledge shop for Michigan's parks and recreation practitioners. Learn more at www.mrpaonline.org/ResourceCenter.

Rec-Connect

The Rec-Connect program advertises low and no cost programs to low-income families in Michigan, connecting residents with opportunities for physical activity and recreation. MRPA and Rec-Connect have joined forces to help member agencies partner with the Rec-Connect initiative. Encourage health and physical activity in your community, while increasing participation in your programs and visits to your parks. Contact MRPA to get Rec-Connected today.

Consulting Services

MRPA is able to support members through various consulting capacities. Association representatives are available to help execute cost recovery analysis for your programs and services, to facilitate assessment centers for open positions and potential employees, and to assist with key local meetings with advisory groups and stakeholders on a variety of topics.

Rec 101

In 2011, Michigan State Parks hosted 84 programs around the state as part of Recreation 101, a campaign to expand outdoor recreation in Michigan through free classes, instruction and equipment demos. Nearly 4,000 people attended these programs in the program's first year, learning more than 40 different outdoor activities from volunteer instructors at the local level.

MRPA has been working in tandem with the Michigan DNR to further promote outdoor recreation through the Rec 101 program. Through the partnership, the MDNR is able to provide marketing materials, access to gear, course instructor contacts and more to the MRPA membership. Visit www.michigan.gov/rec101 to learn more.

Insurance Discounts and Affinity Programs

MRPA is developing a variety of additional benefits for members, including discounts on home and life insurance and affinity programs incentivize your membership. Visit www.mrpaonline.org/benefits.aspx to learn more today!



2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Winds of Change

Photos courtesy of MRPA members Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation, Genesee County Parks and Recreation, Grand Hotel, Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, Oakland County Parks and Recreation, Riverside Kayak Connection and Springfield Township Parks and Recreation.

www.mrpaonline.org