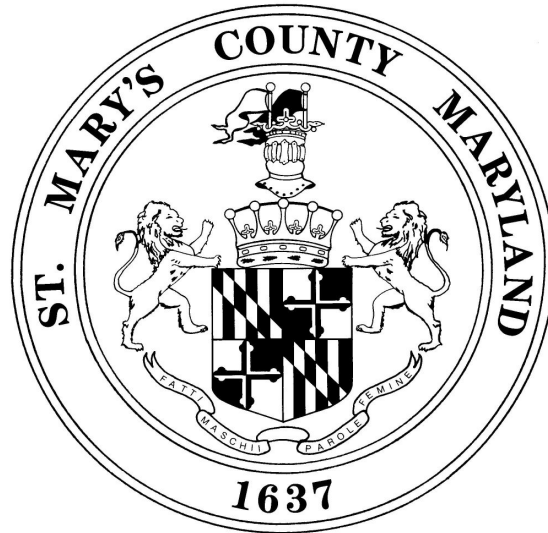


Recreation and Parks Board of St. Mary's County



2016 Annual Report

Tom Nelson, Chairperson
Doug Bellis, Vice-Chairperson
Dick Buckler
Jake Heibel
Caroline King
Patrick Murphy
Fred Parker
Ashley Varner

Brian Loewe, Director

February 8, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Board

The Recreation and Parks (R&P) Board is a nine (9) member board that is appointed by and provides advisory input to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) on recreation and leisure needs within St. Mary's County. The purpose of the Board is "to preside over a comprehensive program of public recreation, including establishment, operation, and maintenance of a system of public parks throughout St. Mary's County." The Board generally meets on the first Thursday of each month, at 5:30 P.M., in the Chesapeake Building, in Leonardtown, unless otherwise announced or a special meeting is necessary.

The R&P Board and Department are responsible for providing public recreational programs and facilities for St. Mary's County citizens which includes developing and maintaining the local park system. During calendar year 2016 this consisted of twenty (20) parks, fifteen (15) public landings and various athletic and special facilities. The Department manages the Leonard Hall, Margaret Brent, Hollywood and Carver Recreation Centers; a Gymnastics Center; the Great Mills Swimming Pool; Skatepark and Sprayground at Nicolet Park; Three Notch Trail; and numerous Licensed Extended Day Centers (before and after school care centers).

Additionally, the Department manages the Wicomico Shores Golf Course (WSGC), with oversight provided by the WSGC Advisory Board. The Department also manages the St. Clement's Island Museum, the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and the Drayden African American Schoolhouse; oversight of these facilities is provided by the Museum Board of Trustees.

The Department is comprised of five divisions: Administration; Recreation; Parks; Museums; and Golf Course. The Director of Recreation and Parks provides supervision and management for these divisions, in addition managing capital planning for new parks and facility expansion and enhancements.

Board Membership

Ms. Valerie Brosky resigned from the Board effective July 27, 2016. The Board was saddened to learn of the passing of former member and trails advocate Jim Swift on June 6, 2016.

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2016 Attendance – Nine Meetings

Member	1/7	2/4	4/7	6/2	7/7	8/4	9/1	10/6	11/2	Attended
D. Bellis					A					8
R. Buckler				A	A					7
J. Heibel				A		A			A	6
V. Broskey*			A			-	-	-	-	4
C. King					A					8
P. Murphy		A			A		A	A		5
F. Parker						A				8
T. Nelson			A							8
A. Varner		A		A			A			6
Members in Attendance	9	7	7	6	5	6	6	7	7	

*Valerie Broskey resigned effective July 27, 2016.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2016

January 7, 2016

- Kyle Lightbown, President of the Southern Maryland BMX organization, presented a check for \$1,105 to Recreation and Parks for the scholarship fund.
- Museum Division Manager Debra Pence provided a report on current activities of the Museum Division.
- The Board reviewed and approved the draft 2015 annual report document.
- Director Brian Loewe provided the Board with an update on the requested FY2017 Capital Improvements budget.
- Director Loewe also provided an update on Capital Projects, which included a status report on: the Three Notch Trail Phase VI, Lancaster Park improvements, and FY2016 Parks and Facilities improvements.
- The Board selected the nominating committee for the 2016 Elections of Officers.

February 4, 2016

- The R&P Board held its annual Election of Officers. Tom Nelson was named Chairperson for the year and Doug Bellis was named Vice-Chairperson.
- Carolyn Laray, Tourism Manager, Department of Economic Development, provided an overview of the St. Mary's County Tourism Master Plan.
- David Guyther, Parks Manager, provided a report on activities and projects of the Parks Division.
- The Board completed the annual review of the Parks Policies and Procedures Manual.

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- Director Loewe also provided an update on Capital Projects, which included a status report on: the Three Notch Trail Phase VI, Lancaster Park Improvements, and FY2016 Parks and Facilities Improvements.
- Director Loewe also provided a FY2017 budget update for the Board.

April 7, 2016

- Jessica Hale, Recreation Division Manager, provided an update on current Recreation Division activities, events and programs.
- The Board heard a presentation from staff and Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. on the status of concept planning efforts for the Three Notch Trail Phase Seven and reviewed preliminary alignments.

May 12, 2016

- A work session with County staff, two Recreation and Parks Board members, and representatives from JMT was held to more closely examine potential alignments for Phase Seven of the Trail.

June 2, 2016

- David Guyther, Parks Manager, provided a report on activities and projects of the Parks Division.
- The Board heard a follow-up presentation from staff and Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. on the status of concept planning efforts for the Three Notch Trail Phase Seven. The Board voted to approve the hybrid alignment for the trail as presented by the consultant and staff (to run adjacent to MD 235 until just past the County airport, then along the SMECO utility corridor).
- The Board approved annual requests for Alcohol Consumption Permits for the Jazz and Seafood Festival, Chamber of Commerce After Hours, and Blessing of the Fleet.

July 7, 2016

- Jessica Hale, Recreation Division Manager, provided an update on current Recreation Division activities, events and programs
- The Board heard a presentation from David Heilmeier, Southern Region Manager, MD Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Heritage Service, who provided an overview of the proposal for bow hunting for deer at Myrtle Point Park. The Board voted to approve the proposal as presented.
- Director Loewe provided an update on Capital Projects: Three Notch Trail Phase VI and VII; Nicolet Park Entrance, Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan update; Elms Beach Park Master Plan; Leonardtown Park; Myrtle Point Park invasive plant species removal; and Weick Playground replacement.

August 4, 2016

- The Board heard a presentation from Mr. Loewe on the process to update the County's Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.

- Director Loewe provided an update on Capital Projects: Three Notch Trail Phase VI, Leonardtown Park structure demolition and environmental testing, and Myrtle Point Park bow hunting proposal. The Commissioners of St. Mary's County approved the bow hunting proposal on August 2, 2016.

September 1, 2016

- The Board heard a presentation from Adam Bossi, GreenPlay, LLC, and Department Director Brian Loewe on the status of the project to update the County's Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.
- Director Loewe provided an update on Capital Projects: Lancaster Park, Three Notch Trail Phase VI and VII, potential property acquisition, and Park and Facility improvements.

October 6, 2016

- The Board heard a presentation from Adam Bossi, GreenPlay, LLC, and Department Director Brian Loewe on the status of the project to update the County's Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). The Board provided several recommendations for edits to the plan draft.
- Director Loewe provided an update on Capital Projects: Three Notch Trail Phase VI and VII.
- Mr. Loewe informed the Board that Mr. Nick Isom was recently hired as the new Wicomico Shores Golf Course Manager.

November 2, 2016

- The Board heard a presentation on the County's draft Tourism and Hospitality Master Plan from Chris Kaselemis and Carolyn Laray from the Department of Economic Development, and Dan Fenton and Bethany Parker, from the consulting firm JLL.
- The Board reviewed and approved the draft LPPRP as presented by staff and the consultant from GreenPlay, LLC.
- Director Loewe provided an update on Capital Projects: Lancaster Park Improvement Project and the Leonardtown Park site structure demolition.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED OR EXPECTED

- As stated in previous reports, it is a challenge for R&P Department maintenance staff to keep up with the increased number of parks, miles of trails, public landings and facilities that must be maintained with the current level of staffing.
- The R&P Board will continue to work with R&P staff to study the issue of fees and charges for all programs and facilities (Elms Beach Park, Myrtle Point Park, Great Mills Pool, skate park and sprayground, etc.).

- The consistent challenge for all R&P's recreation programs is limited space to operate programs and storage for supplies. With aging facilities, it is difficult to operate and expand programs to meet community needs.
- Some issues are anticipated to be encountered during design and engineering phase of Phase VII, VIII and IX of the Three Notch Trail (as additional land acquisition, agreements and easements will be needed).
- There is still a need for additional waterfront access points, especially for motorized boating along the Patuxent River. The proposed acquisition of large parcel on the Patuxent, which is currently under contract, is anticipated to go a long way to alleviate this need.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Board will continue to work with the Department and provide support for R&P Capital and other projects. Some of these include:

- Park amenities at the former Hayden Farm site
- Three Notch Trail
- Museum Improvements
- Recreation Facilities and Park Improvements
- Chaptico Park Phased Development
- Elms Beach Park Improvements
- New outdoor sports complex and community/recreation center
- Continue to support Departmental efforts for new programs, events and activities.
- Continue to support staff in efforts to secure a location(s) for additional access to the waterfront. The most pressing need is access along the Patuxent River for a new public landing and related amenities.