Annual Recreation and Conservation Report

2018

Providing outdoor recreation opportunities and conserving natural resources for everyone who lives, works and plays in Northampton County, PA!

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The mission of the Division of Parks & Recreation within the Department of Public Works is to improve the quality of life for all citizens through meaningful leisure activities. We strive to accomplish this goal by serving large numbers of residents from Northampton and surrounding counties in the most effective and efficient manner, while providing varied programs and facilities that are safe, clean and well maintained.

With the exception of organized group camping at Wy-Hit-Tuk and Bear Swamp Parks, night fishing at Minsi Lake and any other approved nighttime or overnight activities, all Northampton County Parks are open for day use only, from sunrise to sunset, 365 days a year.

Northampton County Parks System

There are 16 parks and conservation areas and one five-mile rail trail encompassing nearly 2,000 acres of green space that are owned by the County of Northampton and managed by the Department of Public Works, Division of Parks & Recreation. A 17th park, Minsi Lake, is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but has been leased to the County since 1975 as part of our parks system; one year after the Division of Parks & Recreation was first organized as a Park Board in 1974. These public lands provide outdoor recreation opportunities, greenways, trails and natural resource protection for everyone who lives, works and plays in Northampton County.

Our parks and conservation areas include:

Archibald Johnston Conservation Area (Bethlehem Township, City of Bethlehem)
Bear Swamp Park & Archery Complex (Upper Mount Bethel Township)
Diefenderfer Tract (East Allen Township)
Frost Hollow Overlook (Forks Township)
Fry’s Run Park (Williams Township)
Gall Farm (Plainfield Township)
Gertrude B. Fox Conservation Area (Hanover Township, City of Bethlehem)
Gracedale Open Space Lands (Upper Nazareth Township)
Louise W. Moore Park (Bethlehem Township, Upper Nazareth Township)
Minsi Lake (Upper Mount Bethel Township)
Minsi Lake Wilderness Area (Upper Mount Bethel Township)
Monocacy Meadow (Bethlehem Township)
Mount Jack (Upper Mount Bethel Township)
Mud Run Conservation Area (Lower Mount Bethel Township)
Nor-Bath Trail (Northampton Borough, Allen Township, East Allen Township)
Portland Waterfront Park (Portland Borough)
Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park (Allen Township, East Allen Township)
Wy-Hit-Tuk Park (Williams Township)
Recreational Rental Facilities Abstract

Between the four County Parks that offer pavilions for rent—Louise Moore, Wayne Grube, Wy-Hit-Tuk and Bear Swamp—there were 484 reservations for approximately 28,985 guests in 2018. This is down six reservations from 2017, which represents a decrease of just 1.2% in park rental reservations over last year. In addition to pavilions, tennis courts are also available for rent at Louise Moore Park.

Paid reservations are required for renting park pavilions and tennis courts by groups of ten or more, for which a Facility/Pavilion Permit is issued. All park pavilions include picnic tables and charcoal grills. Additionally, open space picnic areas with picnic tables and charcoal grills are available for rent by groups of ten or more at Louise Moore, Wayne Grube and Wy-Hit-Tuk Parks, for which a Group User Permit is issued. As always, Louise Moore Park was again the most popular park in 2018, with 299 reservations; followed by Wayne Grube Park, with 153 reservations; Wy-Hit-Tuk Park, with 27 reservations; and Bear Swamp Park, with five reservations. The pavilion at Bear Swamp Park is reserved for organized educational and Scout groups, for which rental fees are waived. Bear Swamp Park does not generate revenue.

Total revenue brought in from park rental fees in 2018 was $22,100. This is slightly down from $22,435 in 2017, which represents a 1.5% decrease or $335 less in park rental income over last year. However, due to significant increases in pavilion reservations at Wy-Hit-Tuk Park this year, that park saw an increase of 41% in rental income over last year; $910 in revenue in 2018 compared to $600 in revenue in 2017. Park pavilions, open space picnic areas and tennis courts were available for rent from April 21 to October 7 in 2018.

Graduation & birthday parties are among the popular family & friends events held at Northampton County Parks.
Louise W. Moore was the widow of Hugh Moore, founder of the Dixie Cup Company of Easton. They were married in 1947 and from that time until Mr. Moore’s death in 1972, they lived at Slate Post Farm, which straddled Bethlehem and Lower Nazareth Townships. In 1973, Mrs. Moore deeded the farm to Northampton County for a public park and recreation area. In accordance with Mr. Moore’s wishes, the facility was named in honor of his beloved wife.

In 1974, the County created a Park Board, which Mrs. Moore chaired for ten years, overseeing the development of Slate Post Farm into a regional park, and the development and planning of a number of other County Parks. She died at the age of 90, on December 26, 2009.
Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park offers three pavilions for rent, one playground, one softball field, one multipurpose field, one sand volleyball court and walking trails, including a paved trail that connects to the County-owned Nor-Bath Trail, which is located adjacent to the north end of the park. All three pavilions have electric outlets. The park is located in Allen and East Allen Townships.

Pavilion 1 has a 100-person capacity and Pavilion 2 has a 60-person capacity. Both pavilions are located next to the parking lot at the park entrance on Willowbrook Road, and share restrooms that are located between the two pavilions. Pavilion 3 has a 30-person capacity and is next to a restroom facility; it is located next to the parking lot at the park entrance on East Bullshead Road. All three pavilions at Wayne Grube Park have electric outlets.

Wayne A. Grube was a former football coach and teacher, a Navy veteran and a Northampton County Councilman for 19 years. Mr. Grube was a proponent of the County’s Open Space Initiative and very involved in the Nor-Bath Trail extension into Northampton Borough, for which his namesake park serves as a trailhead.

Originally planned to be called Weaversville Park in recognition of its location near the historical village of Weaversville, Northampton County Council instead chose to dedicate and name the park in memory of Wayne A. Grube upon its official opening in 2011. Mr. Grube died at the age of 74, on November 11, 2008, while serving as Acting Vice President on County Council.
Wy-Hit-Tuk Park is located immediately adjacent to the Delaware Canal and Delaware Canal State Park along the Delaware River and South Delaware River Drive/Delaware River Scenic Drive (PA 611) in Williams Township. It is situated along the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Trail (D&L Trail) and the Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic River Corridor. Wy-Hit-Tuk Park offers one pavilion for rent (45-person capacity with no electric outlets), restrooms, picnic tables and grills on lawn areas throughout the park, one playground, one turf volleyball court, one multipurpose field and an organized group camping area with five campsites.

The camping area is reserved for organized river and trail sojourns and Scout groups, for which rental fees are waived. Scout and sojourn groups utilized the organized group camping area four times in 2018.

The park offers trailhead access to the D&L Trail, a 60-mile recreation trail on the historic Delaware Canal Towpath. Access to the Delaware River is available less than one-half mile upriver of Wy-Hit-Tuk Park, from Delaware Canal State Park, under the I-78 overpass.

An accessible pedestrian bridge spans the Delaware Canal, connecting Wy-Hit-Tuk County Park to Delaware Canal State Park and the D&L Trail.
Bear Swamp Park is named after the expansive forested wetlands located within and outside the park. Bear Swamp is shown and labeled as such on the earliest maps of Northampton County. Bear Swamp and Bear Swamp Powerline Natural Heritage Areas, both located in and adjacent to the park, are listed as areas of State Significance in the Natural Heritage Inventory of Lehigh & Northampton Counties, PA; which means these sites are important for biological diversity and ecological integrity at the state scale. This statewide importance is because these two Natural Heritage Areas are enriched by high alkaline groundwater, which results in the presence of rare and sensitive plant species. Bear Swamp Park lies within the Greater Minsi Lake Greenway as identified in the Lehigh Valley Greenways Plan.

Bear Swamp Park & Archery Complex offers an organized group camping area at Olympic Field, with a pavilion, picnic tables and a charcoal grill for organized groups, like Scouts, for which reservations are required, but rental fees are waived. A nature pavilion, two ponds and an elevated loop boardwalk through Bear Swamp are located just north and west of Olympic Field. Two Scout groups used the organized group camping area in 2018, and Wildlands Conservancy held three different day camps in the organized group camping area at Bear Swamp Park this year; one each in June, July and August.

The park is located on Lake Minsi Drive in Upper Mount Bethel Township. A trail system connects Bear Swamp Park to its namesake Archery Complex immediately south of Olympic Field, across Lake Minsi Drive; and to Minsi Lake, about one-half mile east of the park.

Day campers bushwhack their way through reedgrass (Phragmites) at Bear Swamp Park.
Recreation Program Abstract

It is through the County’s online park reservation system that the Division of Parks & Recreation is able to track the number of facility and open space rentals and park visitors per reservation each year. Additional park visitors are counted when they register for community programs. However, besides pavilion/facility and group reservations and program registration numbers, the County currently has no metrics in place to track the number of other, casual park users who visit County parks, conservation areas or its rail trail each year. Nevertheless, we believe tens-of-thousands of additional visitors utilize these Northampton County Parks & Recreation sites every year.

Many thousands more people visit Northampton County parks, conservation areas and rail trail each year in pursuit of leisure and recreational activities they need not register for with the Division of Parks & Recreation.
Community Programs Summary

Following are three subsections of organized recreation, environmental education and public outreach activities that occurred in Northampton County Parks or on other County-owned properties in 2018. **Parks & Recreation Division Programs** were organized and presented or facilitated by Northampton County Parks Recreation Specialist, and sponsored and open to the public free of charge by the Parks & Recreation Division. **Wildlands Conservancy Programs** were organized and presented by Conservancy education staff in partnership with Northampton County Division of Parks & Recreation. These programs were supported by funding from Northampton County Department of Community & Economic Development and were open to the public free of charge. Eight Conservancy programs occurred at municipal parks and so noted below in green typeface. Likewise, these programs were supported by funding from Northampton County Department of Community & Economic Development. **Third Party Programs** took place at Northampton County Parks and were generally open to the public, but were organized and presented or facilitated and sponsored by other agencies or organizations. The Division of Parks & Recreation waives any rental fees for Scout and school groups.

In addition to being advertised in local media outlets, Parks & Recreation Division programs and Wildlands Conservancy programs were also posted and promoted on the Northampton County and Lehigh Valley Greenways online calendars of events and through the online portal Get Outdoors PA, which connects citizens with outdoor recreation activities on public lands across the state. Additionally, all Wildlands Conservancy Programs were posted and promoted on the Conservancy’s Online Events Calendar. Any program cancelations were due to low registration or inclement weather. Note: 2018 was one of the wettest years on record for the Lehigh Valley.

**Parks & Recreation Division Programs**

- **Salamander Safari**: April 8; Bear Swamp Park; in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and PA Reptile & Amphibian Survey; **22 participants**.
- **28th Annual Kite Day in the Park**: May 5; Louise Moore Park; in partnership with Pocono Kite Symphony and Lehigh Valley Kite Society; **220 participants**.
- **Bird Bear Swamp**: May 12; Bear Swamp Park; **11 participants**.
- **Stargazing**: July 14; Tott’s Gap Arts Institute, Minsi Lake Wilderness Area; in partnership with Astronomer Rich Grebb; **Canceled**.
Community Programs Summary

- **Stargazing:** July 31; Tott’s Gap Arts Institute, Minsi Lake Wilderness Area; in partnership with Astronomer Rich Grebb; **Canceled.**
- **Stargazing:** August 17; Tott’s Gap Arts Institute, Minsi Lake Wilderness Area; in partnership with Astronomer Rich Grebb; **Canceled.**
- **Northampton County Parks & Recreation Intro:** October 10; Moravian Hall Square, Nazareth; 30 participants.
  - Total count of 283 participants at Parks & Recreation Division Programs.

Wildlands Conservancy Programs

- **Winter Exploration Walk:** February 17; Louise Moore Park; **Canceled.**
- **PreK Pathfinders: Snow Sculptors:** March 1; Wayne Grube Park; 8 participants.
- **Family Spring Night Hike:** March 30; Bear Swamp Park; 15 participants.
- **PreK: April Showers:** April 5; Wayne Grube Park; 12 participants.
- **Wildflower Walk:** April 15; Ballas Tract, Bushkill Township; 2 participants.
- **PreK Pathfinders: May Flowers:** May 3; Wayne Grube Park; 24 participants.
- **Wild Edibles Hike:** May 6; Wayne Grube Park; 8 participants.
- **Bike & Bite: Saucon Rail Trail:** May 20; Water Street Park, Hellertown; **Canceled.**
- **Minsi Mud Painting:** May 26; Minsi Lake Park; 44 participants.
- **PreK Pathfinders: Dig It:** June 7; Wayne Grube Park; 19 participants.
- **Day Camp: Outdoor Skills:** June 11; Wayne Grube Park; 2 participants.
- **Day Camp: Outdoor Skills:** June 18; Louise Moore Park; 8 participants.
- **Day Camp: Outdoor Skills:** June 25; Bear Swamp Park; 10 participants.
- **Day Camp: Wildlife:** July 2; Wayne Grube Park; 10 participants.
- **PreK Pathfinders: Into the Creek:** July 5; Wayne Grube Park; 15 Participants.
- **Day Camp: Wildlife:** July 9; Louise Moore Park; 15 participants.
- **Bike & Bite: D&L Trail:** July 14; Forks of the Delaware Trailhead; **Canceled.**
- **Canoeing 101:** July 14; Canal Park, Walnutport; 25 participants.
- **Canoeing 101:** July 22; Canal Park, Northampton; 15 participants.
- **Day Camp Wildlife:** July 30; Bear Swamp Park; 15 participants.
- **PreK: Animal Tales:** August 2; Wayne Grube Park; 16 participants.
- **Day Camp: Outside Art:** August 6; Wayne Grube Park; 15 participants.
- **National S’mores Day:** August 10; Wy-Hit-Tuk Park; 34 participants.
- **Day Camp: Outside Art:** August 13; Louise Moore Park; 14 participants.
- **Bike & Bite: Saucon Trail:** August 19; Water Street Park, Hellertown; 21 participants.
Community Programs Summary

- **River Snorkeling**: August 26; Canal Park, Northampton; **25 participants**.
- **Day Camp: Outside Art**: August 20; Bear Swamp Park; **14 participants**.
- **Bike & Bite: D&L Trail**: September 1; Forks of the Delaware Trailhead; **28 participants**.
- **PreK Pathfinders: Beach Yoga**: September 6; Wayne Grube Park; **4 participants**.
- **Dutch Oven Breakfast**: September 9; Wy-Hit-Tuk Park; **6 participants**.
- **PreK Pathfinders: Creepy Crawlies**: October 4; Wayne Grube Park; **Canceled**.
- **Hoody Hoot Hike**: October 13; Bear Swamp Park; **3 participants**.
- **Geocaching**: November 3; Bear Swamp Park; **7 participants**.

- Total count of 434 participants at Wildlands Conservancy Programs.

Third Party Programs

- **Northampton County Sheriff’s Department Annual Easter Egg Hunt**: March 24; Louise Moore Park; **300 participants**.
- **Northampton County Conservation District Annual Envirothon**: April 26; Louise Moore Park; **127 participants**.
- **Boy Scout Troop 78 Overnight Camping**: April 27-28; Bear Swamp Park; **20 participants**.
- **Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Bus Tour**: June 6; Wayne Grube Park; **100 participants**.
- **Boy Scout Troop 51 Overnight Camping**: June 7-9; Wy-Hit-Tuk Park; **32 participants**.
- **US Tennis Association Beginner’s Tennis Match Exhibition**: June 10; Louise Moore Park; **18 participants**.
- **Delaware-Lehigh Amateur Radio Club Annual Field Day**: June 23-24; Louise Moore Park; **110 participants**.
- **Bethlehem Special Olympics**: June 24; Wayne Grube Park; **100 participants**.
- **Penn State Extension Master Gardeners Hypertufa Workshop**: June 26; Louise Moore Park; **8 participants**.
- **Boy Scout Day Camp Week**: July 9-13; Louise Moore Park; BSA, Minsi Trails Council; **150 participants**.
- **US Tennis Association Junior Team Tennis Championship**: July 14; Louise Moore Park; **75 participants**.
- **Lenape Nation River Sojourn Overnight Camping**: August 12-13; Wy-Hit-Tuk Park; **15 participants**.
- **Northampton-Monroe Farm Bureau Legislative Breakfast**: August 23; Louise Moore Park; **70 participants**.
Community Programs Summary

- **Penn State Extension 4-H Cloverbud Day Camp**: August 24; Louise Moore Park; 18 participants.
- **Knock Out Pain 5K Run/Walk**: September 23; Louise Moore Park; Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association; 100 participants.
- **Fry’s Run Watershed Association Streamside Tour & Plant Sale**: September 29; Fry’s Run Park; 32 participants.
- **US Tennis Association Women’s League Palooza**: September 30; Louise Moore Park; 27 participants.
- **Boy Scout Troop 78 Overnight Camping**: October 13-14; Wy-Hit-Tuk Park; 20 participants.
- **School Groups (public & private)**: 19 dates/groups; Louise Moore & Wayne Grube Parks; 1,336 participants.
- **Boy & Girl Scout Groups (individual day programs)**: 22 dates/groups; Louise Moore & Wayne Grube Parks; 1,180 participants.
- **Tott’s Gap Arts Institute Programs**: 73 dates/programs; 1,053 participants. (Tott’s Gap Arts Institute is a nonprofit community arts center located in the Minsi Lake Wilderness Area and leased long-term by the County to a third party.)

- Total count of 4,891 participants at Third Party Programs
  - Combined grand total count of 5,608 participants at Parks & Recreation Division, Wildlands Conservancy and Third Party Programs at Northampton County Parks in 2018.
Community Gardens Program Summary

The Division of Parks & Recreation manages two community gardens, one each at Louise Moore Park and Diefenderfer Tract. There are 56 plots at Louise Moore Park Community Garden, established in 1982, and 26 plots at Diefenderfer Tract Community Garden, established in 2009. Each plot is about 15’x27’ or about 405 square feet. These community garden plots are available to the public free of charge by reservation. All 82 plots were reserved and actively gardened in 2018. Some community gardeners have been gardening at Louise Moore Park for nearly 20 years. The lists of people waiting for garden plot openings at both community gardens grows each year. At the close of 2018, there were 12 names on a waiting list for the Diefenderfer Tract Community Garden and six on a waiting list for the Louise Moore Park Community Garden.

2018 was the third consecutive year that Louise Moore Park Community Gardeners participated in the Plant A Row Lehigh Valley program, which provides fresh fruits and vegetables to local food-insecure families by way of local gardeners and local food banks. It was the second year Diefenderfer Tract Community Gardeners participated in this volunteer program. This year, Louise Moore Park gardeners donated 272.54 pounds of fresh produce to the Nazareth Area Food Bank, while Diefenderfer Tract gardeners donated 171.12 pounds of fresh produce to Second Harvest Food Bank. According to Plant A Row Lehigh Valley, these generous donations by our community gardeners were enough for local families to provide a serving of nutritious fresh vegetables with about 1,700 meals. Kudos, Northampton County Parks Community Gardeners!

To reserve a community garden plot at either Louise Moore Park or Diefenderfer Tract, call the Parks Recreation Specialist at 610/829-6404.

To learn more about Plant A Row Lehigh Valley, visit https://plantarowlv.org/
The Division of Parks & Recreation planned and/or implemented a number of capital parks, recreation and natural resource conservation projects in 2018. These projects helped actionize *Livable Landscapes—An Open Space Plan for Northampton County*, the purpose of which is to guide the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the County's open space resources, and create linkages between the County's vast natural resources; outdoor recreational facilities; greenways and blueways; farmland; and historic, cultural and scenic resources. The plan seeks to encourage partnerships to achieve common open space goals.

### Parks & Recreation Projects

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Accomplishments/Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gall Farm Park Master Site Development Project</td>
<td>Plan for the development of the 160-acre Gall Farm into a regional County Park &amp; trailhead for the adjacent Plainfield Township Recreation Trail.</td>
<td>Consulting firm contracted, project steering committee established, first public meeting held and park planning begun this year. Planning will continue in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minsi Lake Greenway Project</td>
<td>Develop a greenway &amp; conservation plan for connecting, protecting &amp; improving County properties in the Minsi Lake Greenway, i.e., Bear Swamp Park, Minsi Lake Park, Minsi Lake Wilderness Area.</td>
<td>PA DCNR awarded $75,000 grant for the project in November, which the County will match. Project planning will begin in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minsi Lake Park Rehabilitation Project</td>
<td>Replace, renovate &amp; rebuild decades old park facilities, amenities &amp; infrastructure &amp; make the lake &amp; park an accessible recreation area for everyone, regardless of physical abilities.</td>
<td>Northampton County Council approved $500,000 for the project in March &amp; PA DCNR awarded a $200,000 matching grant for the project in November this year. Project will begin in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minsi Lake Trail Rehabilitation Project</td>
<td>Plan, design, engineer &amp; permit improvements to the Lake Trail &amp; its stream &amp; wetland crossings on the north side of Minsi Lake.</td>
<td>Mapping completed, consulting engineering firm contracted &amp; field assessments begun this year. Will complete planning in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nor-Bath Trail East End Extension Project</td>
<td>Plan construction of final 1.5 miles of Nor-Bath Trail from Jacksonville Road in East Allen Township to Mill Street in Bath Boro.</td>
<td>Mill Street Trailhead engineering &amp; design work begun this year &amp; will continue in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks Signage &amp; Kiosk Project</td>
<td>Develop destination signage &amp; kiosk standards &amp; branding for Northampton County Parks &amp; Rec Division &amp; complete designs for destination signs &amp; kiosks for 10 County parks &amp; the Nor-Bath Trail.</td>
<td>Graphic design firm contracted &amp; site assessments &amp; design concepts completed this year. Finalize standards &amp; fabricate signs for 11 sites in 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlands Conservancy Community Partnership</td>
<td>Expand &amp; enhance environmental education, community outreach &amp; outdoor recreation activities throughout Northampton County.</td>
<td>Provided 33 community programs in County and Municipal Parks for 434 participants this year. Will continue partnership in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wy-Hit-Tuk Park Rehabilitation Project</td>
<td>Plan, design, engineer &amp; permit improvements for recreational facilities, amenities, infrastructure &amp; natural resources at Wy-Hit-Tuk Park.</td>
<td>Consulting firm contracted, project steering committee established &amp; project planning begun this year. Planning will continue in 2019.</td>
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Livable Landscapes—An Open Space Plan for Northampton County was published in 2015 as an update to the most recent County parks plan, Northampton County Parks—2010, which was published in 2002. Since the publication of that plan, many tasks have been accomplished and milestones reached that further the advancement of the open space network in the County.

These accomplishments prompted recognition from the PA Land Trust Association, which in May 2015, awarded Northampton County the 2015 Government Conservation Leadership Award for leadership in the conservation of particular landscapes and crucial natural resources.

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<tr>
<td>American Chestnut Tree Restoration Project at Louise Moore Park</td>
<td>Partner with the American Chestnut Foundation to plant wild seedlings now &amp; blight-resistant trees among them in 5-7 years. Seedlings will grow &amp; eventually be pollinated by the blight-resistant trees &amp; produce blight-resistant chestnuts/offspring.</td>
<td>Planted &amp; protected 8 seedlings each at 2 sites (16 seedlings total) at Louise Moore Park this year. Will monitor &amp; maintain seedlings in 2019 &amp; beyond, before planting blight-resistant trees among them in 5-7 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catasaquoa Creek Riparian Buffer Enhancement Project at Wayne Grube Park</td>
<td>Increase forest buffer along 2000’ of Catasaquoa Creek for water quality &amp; habitat improvements by planting container stock trees &amp; shrubs.</td>
<td>PA DCNR Riparian Buffer Forest Grant awarded for project in 2017 &amp; 300 trees &amp; shrubs planted in October this year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fry’s Run Flood Damage Tree Repair Project &amp; Riparian Buffer Enhancement Project at Fry’s Run Park.</td>
<td>Repair previous tree plantings damaged in August 2018 flashflood on Fry’s Run &amp; replace dead trees from &amp; add more trees to earlier plantings along 800’ of creek for water quality &amp; habitat improvements.</td>
<td>Tied &amp; staked upright about 100 earlier tree plantings flattened by August floodwaters &amp; planted 30 container stock trees in October this year with funding from 2016 PA DCNR Riparian Forest Buffer Grant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Moore Park Tree Replacement Project</td>
<td>Replace 45 mature spruce trees along east end of park lost to Superstorm Sandy in 2012 with 7’ tall ball &amp; burlap Colorado blue, Norway &amp; Serbian spruce trees (15 of each).</td>
<td>Project accomplished in 2017. All 15 Colorado blue spruce trees succumbed to needlecast fungus after planting last year. Vendor replaced them with Serbian spruce trees in May this year.</td>
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<td>Louise Moore Park Wildflower Meadow Project</td>
<td>Convert about ½ acre of turfgrass into model wildflower meadow for pollinator habitat &amp; improved water quality &amp; soil health, public education &amp; park visitor enjoyment.</td>
<td>Project Scope of Work developed in 2017 &amp; site preparation completed this year. Record wet summer &amp; early fall frost postponed seeding to spring 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minsi Lake Habitat Improvement Project</td>
<td>Improve fish &amp; turtle habitat by building 851 stone &amp; timber fish habitat structures across 56 acres of lakebed &amp; 10 turtle basking platforms to float on surface of Minsi Lake.</td>
<td>PA Fish &amp; Boat Commission developed 5-Year Habitat Management Plan in 2017 &amp; most project funding secured this year. Project construction planned for July 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monocacy Creek Restoration Project at Archibald Johnston Conservation Area</td>
<td>Complete design &amp; permitting for the removal of structures along one-mile section of creek to restore streambanks &amp; floodplain.</td>
<td>Site analysis, mapping &amp; RFP for project design work completed this year. Will contract design &amp; engineering work in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monocacy Meadow Park Environmentally Sensitive Parking Lot Reconstruction Project</td>
<td>Partner with County Conservation District to rebuild compacted dirt &amp; gravel parking lot with environmentally sensitive materials to infiltrate stormwater &amp; better protect adjacent Monocacy Creek.</td>
<td>Awarded $17,000 Dirt &amp; Gravel Road Maintenance Grant for project from Conservation District &amp; constructed the project with Parks &amp; Rec staff this year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildlife Habitat Improvement Projects at Gracedale Open Space Lands &amp; in the Minsi Lake Greenway</td>
<td>Partner with PA Game Commission &amp; its Voluntary Public Access &amp; Habitat Incentive Program to improve wildlife habitat with federal funds on County lands open to public hunting.</td>
<td>Developed plans to improve wildlife habitat on 75 acres at 5 sites this year (1 at Gracedale Open Space Lands &amp; 4 in the Minsi Lake Greenway). Will begin implementing plans with PGC in 2019 ($111,700 value).</td>
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Recr  

eation & Conservation Partners

The Division of Parks & Recreation has always relied on partnerships to help develop and deliver community outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation programs and projects in County Parks and Conservation Areas. From sister departments within Northampton County Government to state and local agencies, conservation organizations, school groups and Scouts, these partners have helped the Division present family recreation programs and youth day camps; build and repair trails; plant trees; stabilize failing streambanks; and improve our County Parks and quality of life for over 40 years. In 2018, we began a new partnership and continued working closely with all our established partners on outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation projects across the County.

This year, we collaborated with The American Chestnut Foundation and its partnership with the State University of New York College of Environmental Science & Forestry on the American Chestnut Research & Restoration Project (ESF American Chestnut Project). Once the most common, widespread, largest, tallest and fastest-growing hardwood tree in our eastern forests, the American chestnut was effectively decimated throughout its range 100 years ago by an accidentally imported fungal disease known as chestnut blight. Nearly 4 billion chestnut trees died in the course of 40 years. Although not extinct, young trees succumb to the blight at the same time they begin to produce chestnuts; preventing them from ever growing to their former majestic heights and incredible girths or producing massive crops of nuts. The chestnut blight has been called the greatest ecological disaster to strike the world’s forests in all of history.

The ESF American Chestnut Project has developed a blight-resistant American chestnut tree and is working to restore this iconic and valuable cultural symbol to the forests of the eastern United States. To that end, the Project is seeking individuals and organizations to establish small “mother tree orchards.” This year, Northampton County Division of Parks & Recreation did just that—see American Chestnut Tree Restoration Project at Louise Moore Park under Conservation Projects on the previous page of this report.

In these mother tree orchards, six to eight wild blight-susceptible seedlings are planted and cared for until they are mature enough to produce pollen (about five years). At that time, a single young blight-resistant chestnut tree is planted in the center of the orchard. That tree then naturally pollinates the wild trees, which will produce nuts, half of which will inherit the blight-resistant gene. The ESF Project and the American Chestnut Foundation are committed to restoring the American chestnut tree to our eastern woodlands to benefit our environment, our wildlife and our society. And Northampton County is excited to be part of this initiative!
Friends of Minsi Lake—a standing committee under the nonprofit Northampton County Junior Conservation School, and guided by Northampton County Parks & Recreation staff—celebrated its second year in 2018 as the lead body raising awareness and money to improve lake habitat at Minsi in the short-term, and other natural and recreational resources at the park in the long-term. The friends group raised nearly $70,000 this year, most of which will help fund construction materials to build over 850 fish and turtle habitat structures at the lake. In turn, the PA Fish & Boat Commission, which owns the lake and has leased it to the County as part of its Parks System since 1975, will provide all the heavy equipment, operators, laborers and supervision for the two-week construction project next summer. The lake was drained last year for a dam rehabilitation project, exposing the basin for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve habitat on the empty lakebed. The dam rehab project will also take place next year.

2018 also marked the second year of the County’s partnership with Wildlands Conservancy—the Lehigh Valley’s premier environmental protection and education organization—and its assistance to the Division of Parks & Recreation in greenways and trail development, natural resource restoration and outdoor recreation programming. In the past two years, the Conservancy secured significant grant funding from the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources and the PA Department of Environmental Protection for tree plantings and invasive species management along streams at Fry’s Run Park and Wayne Grube Park, for design and permitting work for a stream restoration project on Monocacy Creek at Archibald Johnston Conservation Area and for the development of a conservation and greenways plan for the Minsi Lake Greenway, which includes nearly 800 acres of County-owned properties. Additionally, Wildlands Conservancy delivered 33 outdoor recreation and environmental education programs for 434 people at County and Municipal Parks this year. These Conservancy programs and projects involved close coordination and planning with County staff from the Parks & Recreation Division.

Other partnerships—many long-standing—with which the Division of Parks & Recreation collaborated on outdoor recreation programs, conservation projects and community outreach this year, include Astronomer Rich Grebb; Fry’s Run Watershed Association; Lehigh Valley Greenways; Northampton County Conservation District; Northampton County Department of Administration, Northampton County Department of Community & Economic Development, Northampton County Open Space Program; PA Game Commission; Penn State Extension; Plant A Row Lehigh Valley; Pocono Kite Symphony and The Nature Conservancy. The Division values these partnerships and looks forward to continuing and expanding our collaborations with each one in 2019.
Special Use Permits Summary

In addition to Facility/Pavilion and Group User Permits described in the Recreational Rental Facilities Abstract at the beginning of this report, Special Use Permits are also available and required for specific and pre-approved activities on County park and conservation lands. These activities must be consistent with current County ordinances, rules, regulations and applicable state and federal laws. The special use request must not pose a risk to public health or safety, and it must not unreasonably conflict or interfere with other public uses of County-owned lands. The permit is granted for a specific use of County land for a specific period of time; there is no charge for Special Use Permits. Depending on the special use activity, a certificate of liability insurance may be required with the Special Use Permit.

Examples of special uses include field surveys or biological research; plant specimen collection; extended educational programming; amateur or professional filmmaking; geocaching; Scout projects; marathons; and organized conservation projects, like stream cleanups or tree plantings.

In 2018, ten Special Use Permits were issued to qualified individuals for the following purposes: Eagle Scout projects (one each at Louise Moore Park and Fry's Run Park); turtle research at Bear Swamp Park and in the Minsi Lake Wilderness Area; chickadee research in the Minsi Lake Wilderness Area; drone videography at Bear Swamp Park & Minsi Lake; a plant sale at Fry's Run Park; a stream cleanup and recreational birdwatching at Archibald Johnston Conservation Area; and radio controlled model aircraft flying and beekeeping at Gracedale Open Space Lands.

To make a Special Use Permit request, call the Parks Recreation Specialist at 610/829-6404.
Seasonal Park Attendant Program Summary

The Division of Parks & Recreation has employed part-time seasonal Park Attendants at its busiest parks since the early 1980s. Park Attendants are responsible for providing assistance to the public, park security, safety inspections and light maintenance. They work closely with parks maintenance staff and report directly to the Parks Recreation Specialist. Park Attendants are employed during the park facilities reservation season from April to October each year. This year, that season ran from April 21 to October 7.

Ten Park Attendants are employed at the County’s two busiest parks: six at Louise Moore and four at Wayne Grube. Generally, Park Attendants are onsite from 8:00am to closing (sunset) every day of the week during the park facilities reservation season. They are in daily contact with the public and are the face of Northampton County Parks; assisting visitors in locating park facilities and monitoring visitors’ use of parks to help ensure safe and pleasant experiences for everyone.

In addition to checking park user permits and assisting park visitors, Park Attendants perform traffic control when necessary; regular safety inspections of playgrounds and equipment; light maintenance duties, like trash removal and cleaning restrooms and grills; and they assist parks maintenance staff with landscaping, painting and sweeping. They also assist with special events and are responsible for delineating and staking out the 86 garden plots at the County’s two community gardens in the spring of each year. Our Park Attendants are invaluable human resources in our County Parks & Recreation Division.

Good Morning Jim,

I have to say that the personnel that work at the garden and park are terrific!

It’s always great fun to plant at the garden each year.

Enjoy the rest of the year and I look forward to the next planting season.

Sincerely,

Ed Miller
Garden Plot #40
Louise Moore Park
Community Garden

Park Attendants Paul Stefancin (L) & Harold Zellner (R) pose for the camera from their utility cart at Louise Moore Park

Park Attendants Larry Knecht (L) & Dominic Condomitti (R) serve lunch to Parks & Rec maintenance staff during Penn State Extension Training at Louise Moore Park
Parks Maintenance Program Summary

The Division of Parks & Recreation employs 15 fulltime maintenance staff in four work crews: nine groundskeepers, four lead groundskeepers and two foremen. Additionally, the Division employs three part-time seasonal grass cutters each year from May to September. While the Parks Maintenance Facilities are headquartered at the Gracedale Complex, maintenance work sites are located at Louise Moore Park and Wayne Grube Park, where two crews each are assigned.

In addition to maintaining the grounds, buildings and equipment at the County’s 18 Parks and Conservation Areas, the Division’s fulltime maintenance staff are also responsible for mowing grass, removing snow and performing landscape maintenance at the County Courthouse and adjacent facilities in Easton; the County Nursing Home, Greystone Office Building, Parks Maintenance Facilities and 911 Operations Center at the Gracedale Complex in Upper Nazareth Township; and the County Department of Human Services facility in Bethlehem Township. Our parks maintenance staff are indispensable in keeping our County Parks and other County facilities open and in good repair throughout the year.

Parks groundskeepers Nick Appezato (L) & Jason Hegedus (R) auger a hole to plant one of 300 trees for a riparian buffer along Catasauqua Creek at Wayne Grube Park in October 2018
2018 was a big year for change in Northampton County. It began with a new County Executive, Council, Administration and Public Works Directors. And it ended with the retirement of veteran Parks & Recreation administrators, and the hiring of their successors.

In October, Gordon Heller retired after leading the Division of Parks & Recreation for 26 years. As Parks Superintendent, Gordy was instrumental in developing the Nor-Bath Trail and Wayne Grube Park, upgrading older park facilities and acquiring more park and conservation lands.

A month earlier, Barbara Martucci retired as Parks & Rec’s Clerical Specialist. Barb worked for 20 years in clerical and technical support with Northampton County: 5-1/2 years with Penn State Extension, 2 years with the Conservation District, 9 years with Farmland Preservation and 3-1/2 years with Parks & Recreation.

While we miss Barb and Gordy, we welcome their respective successors, Holly Pulcinelli and Bryan Cope, and wish them the very best in their new jobs with Parks & Rec. Both are veteran County employees; Bryan coordinated the County Open Space Program for 5 years under the Department of Administration, and Holly worked for the County Courts System for 20 years.

In Memoriam: Sadly, we lost a Northampton County Parks & Recreation pioneer this year, too. Dr. Isidore “Bill” Mineo, Park Board Executive Director and Parks Superintendent (1975-1992), passed away on September 12. Under Bill’s leadership, the nascent Park Board successfully launched and sustained a land acquisition and park development program across the County. Most of the County’s 18 parks and conservation areas were acquired and developed or preserved on Bill’s watch.
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Bryan Cope, Superintendent       Jim Wilson, Recreation Specialist