

NEWS RELEASE

WISCONSIN PARK & RECREATION ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

The Park Design Awards, Outstanding Young Professional of the Year and Outstanding Professional Award of the Year will be presented at the Annual Conference in Wisconsin Dells on November 6th at 3:30 pm. The presentation will be made at the Chula Vista Resort, Room G.

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association Park Section Announces 2014 Award Winners

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



**Vince Maas, Parks Superintendent
City of Menasha**

Vince has used his background, formal training, and education in Park Management to increase the focus on parks and forestry for the City of Menasha. He has significantly increased professional training opportunities for park staff which has resulted in a greater balance and higher level of services provided to the community.

An example of this great work is that the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources “Project Partnership Award” was given to the City of Menasha and Canadian National Railroad in 2013 for the “30 for 30” program. The City of Menasha partnered with CN and numerous volunteer groups to create a project that not only celebrated Menasha’s 30th anniversary as a Tree City USA, but also involved the community in its urban forestry program. These volunteer groups teamed up to improve the long term health and diversity of the urban forest by planting 30 trees in each aldermanic district. Two Hundred and Forty (240) trees were planted, with over 100 volunteers participating.

Vince has been involved in WPRA Park and Aquatics sections since 2005 when he was first hired by the City of Oshkosh. Vince believes the section workshops are another great opportunity to network and gather ideas which led him to become more involved with WPRA Park Section Board as the region II representative for four years, a member of the annual conference committee for the past two years and at this time as the representative at large.

Please join us in congratulating Vince Maas, the 2014 Park Section Outstanding Professional of the Year.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



Matthew Collins, Unit Coordinator

Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture

Matthew has worked to develop a pilot program that offers underprivileged youth an opportunity to experience career options within the Milwaukee County Parks system. This partnership with the Milwaukee Job Corps, a federally funded campus offered to financially underprivileged youth seeking to obtain experience with a skilled trade after graduating high school. This program has not only provided opportunity and experience for the participants it has provided Milwaukee County with park services in a non-costly manner.

Matthew has had published articles in the Impact Magazine, frequently attends SEPRC meetings, is a member of the Cudahy Healthiest Coalition and last year had the opportunity to attend the NRPA Congress in Houston. He is a recipient of past Silver Star Award for the Summer Youth Employment Program in 2008 and received the 2009 Kudos Award for marketing excellence from NRPA.

Please join us in congratulating Matthew Collins, the 2014 Park Section Outstanding Young Professional of the Year.

PARK DESIGN AWARDS of Merit (Under \$125,000) Kenosha Parks Department – Poerio Park Nature Playground



Poerio Park Nature Center is located on the north side of the city of Kenosha along the county Pike Bike Trail. The Pike River flows through this large tract of land eventually emptying into Lake Michigan 1/2 mile downstream. The park is conservancy based recreation and contained an extensive hiking/walking trail system, fishing pond with ADA pier, and small shelter/restroom facility. In 2012, an invasive species of red crayfish was discovered in the pond and the DNR ordered the pond to be destroyed and filled with clay to eliminate the pest. The pond was a main attraction for the park and occupied the space directly adjacent to the shelter and parking lot. When the pond was filled, the neighborhood and community residents voiced their disappointment of losing this park amenity.

The design team evaluated several new uses for the former pond site, and conceived the concept of nature themed playground stations around the perimeter loop path and an ice rink over the old pond footprint. These new uses allow the park visitors to utilize the space year round and keep the park in a conservancy type usage.

The play equipment was designed and selected to portray natural elements such as a dragonfly seesaw, spiderweb climbing structure, mushroom table and seats, and trees to climb. The main post and deck structure included custom constructed posts wrapped in GFRC tree bark and a laser cut roof with leaf patterns. Woodland animals were hidden into the structures to allow for discovery by the children as they play.

Because of the clay cap on the old pond, no excavation could occur, thus requiring creative site grading to create the new ice rink area. The design team worked to maintain full ADA access to all facilities and integrated the old ADA fishing platform into the ice rink as the main point of entry.

PARK DESIGN AWARDS of Merit (\$125,000-\$350,000)

City of West Bend Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department – Regner Park South Bridge



Regner Park is the City of West Bend's oldest and most popular park. Built in 1935 by the CCC, the park had been virtually untouched for 75 years. The park attendance was the lowest it had been in years, and the buildings were falling into extreme disrepair. City budgets were being cut more every year, and we had to look for other sources to fund renovations and bring people back to the park.

In October of 2009, the Regner Rejuvenation Committee was formed, with members from each of the four major service clubs: the Kiwanis Early Risers, Noon Rotary, Sunrise Rotary and Noon Kiwanis. Their goal was simple: to improve Regner Park and bring people back. Never before had all four service clubs worked together on the same project. Without the efforts of these service groups' fundraising efforts, none of these projects would have come to fruition. Fundraising began and in 2010, the lunch and beverage stands were renovated and renamed the Kiwanis and Rotary concession stands; a new 200-person open air pavilion was constructed; the bandstand was renovated and expanded; the entire area received new water and sanitary sewer lines, new asphalt pavement and a new lannon stone retaining wall. 2011 saw new restrooms constructed; construction of the new Silver Lining Stage, as well as new storm water sewer construction and additions. Regner Park quickly became extremely popular with everyone. The winter of 2013-2014 saw Enchantment in the Park, a drive and walk through Holiday light display, move to Regner Park from the Washington County Fairy Park. In order for this move to occur, a new bridge was needed. Their proposed route would cross a narrow pedestrian bridge that had to be removed and replaced with a bridge that could handle buses loaded with visitors.

Due to Enchantment coming to Regner Park, the bridge had to be built. Unfortunately, bids for construction came in over twice the estimated amount and therefore over twice our available budget. In less than four months we needed a bridge in place for vehicles to cross. City staff stepped up to the plate and were able to construct the bridge in house, saving the City of West Bend over \$100,000.00. Never in the history of the City had staff attempted such a large, complicated project. We knew we had the expertise in all of our staff, we just had to put it together to create the perfect construction team.

PARK DESIGN AWARDS of Merit (\$350,001 & above)

City of West Bend Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department – Lac Lawrann Conservancy Learning Center



Lac Lawrann Conservancy has a long, rich history of nature preservation in the City of West Bend. What is now 145 acres began as an 18 acre donation in 1979 by Lawrence and Ann Maurin. Originally, the property was only available to the public during limited hours, and people had to be escorted by volunteers. Now the property boasts year round nature programs, as well as nature in the classroom programs, field trips, adult education classes and more. This expansion of use and programming emphasized a growing need for flush restrooms and a year round building. In 1999, a study was done to determine the feasibility of renovating the barn on site into a nature center. In 2005, another study was done regarding options for a Nature Center. In 2006, the decision was made to preserve the barn as a barn and to raise money to build a new nature center just north of the barn. In 2007 the renovations to the barn were complete and the group turned its focus to the Nature Center. In 2010, a conceptual design for the Nature Center was created and the City was awarded a Knowles-Nelson Stewardship DNR grant for \$250,000 towards the new Nature Center. From 2012 to 2013, the Nature Center, now renamed the Learning Center, was constructed for \$1.2 million, with 93% of it being grants or donations.

With recent trends of budget cuts in parks and recreation divisions across the state and the country, our Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department had to be creative in obtaining funds for construction of the new building. Luckily, the Friends of Lac Lawrann Conservancy is a very dedicated group who is proud of the Conservancy and its legacy. Through their creative efforts, the money was raised and phase I, a 4,800 square foot building was completed and dedicated on Earth Day 2013.

Due to the nature of this project being located in a conservancy, there was a huge emphasis on being environmentally sustainable in all aspects of both construction and future maintenance of the building.

EDITOR'S NOTE

WPRA is a statewide, non-profit service organization dedicated to extending the social, health, cultural and economic benefits of parks and recreation through its network of recreation/park professionals and civic leaders. There are approximately 2,500 WPRA members who include state and local experts on recreation, urban planning, aquatics, at-risk-youth, therapeutic recreation services, and parkland development and services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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