



# Park People News

Creating Citizen Connections to Our Parks

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## Spring 2012 Newsletter

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**Join The Park People in celebration of the 105th anniversary of our Milwaukee County Parks!**

**Sat, June 2  
11 am to 4 pm  
McKinley Park  
on Milwaukee's Lakefront  
1750 N Lincoln Memorial Dr**



## **Free Family Fun!**

### **Live Performances by:**

New Horizon Band  
McMenamin Irish Dancers  
COA Youth Drum Band  
Seniorgee Dancers  
Pink Banana Theater Company  
KT and the Universal Love Band



### **Also:**

Park History with John Gurda  
YMCA's Play in the Park Activities  
Door County Sled Dogs  
The Klements Racing Sausages  
Bango from the Bucks  
Kids Bounce House  
Local Community Vendors



During the event, learn about all the family-friendly, free or low-cost activities throughout Milwaukee County Parks including the new **Oak Leaf Discovery Tour**. The tour is a great way for the community to explore the scenic beauty and history of our parks and trails. Participants can hike, bike, or run/walk your way through 14 designated stops along the Oak Leaf Trail.

Participants can collect special stamps when visiting a stop on the tour in a special 105th Anniversary passport. Each location is profiled in the passport with a photo and historical information. Collect at least eight stamps between June 2 and September 15 to be eligible to win prizes including new bicycles, golf passes, private-behind the scenes park tours, restaurant gift certificates and

more! Passports cost \$3 each or 5 for \$10 and proceeds support the Oak Leaf Trail.

Visit [www.parkpeoplemke.org/summer/105-days-summer](http://www.parkpeoplemke.org/summer/105-days-summer) for more details.

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### **Kohls Cares, they really do!**

The Park People organization (TPP) partnered with Kohl's corporate employees during the month of April to do a number of park improvement projects. During eleven unique events that were organized by The Park People, well over 300 Kohl's employees completed projects that ranged from simply picking up litter to painting park buildings and even building bridges.

The projects were conducted in conjunction with the annual Kohl's Go Green initiative, a nationwide effort conducted through Kohl's associate volunteer program, Associates in Action. Kohl's volunteers support youth-serving nonprofit organizations by participating in environmentally-based activity, and Kohl's matches those



efforts with corporate grants. The grants total \$50,000, which are then placed in Park People restricted funds that the Parks Department can make use of for supplies, special projects, travel expenses, and so on.

This is the second year that TPP has partnered with Kohl's in their Go Green initiative. Kohl's solicits volunteers from specific departments within their Corporate Center to partner with a number of local nonprofit organizations and this year TPP had the opportunity to work with employees from Kohl's Real Estate and Construction divisions who have with a plethora of experience and wanted TPP to find projects that could make use of their expertise.



To that end, Jim Goulee, TPP Executive Director, worked with Guy Smith, the Parks Dept. Chief of Operations, to identify a few projects that would normally not be considered typical volunteer projects. Three eventually surfaced that were deemed worthy of the experience and talents offered by Kohl's

construction and real estate employees. The first and most difficult was rebuilding five of the bridges in the historic Seven Bridges trail at Grant Park which had to be done in an environmentally considerate way. The second was creating a storage building at Lincoln Park and the third was installing over 200 feet of split rail fencing at South Shore Park.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to all the volunteers that participated this year and to Kohl's Corporation for its continued community support of our Parks!



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## Exploring the Natural Areas of the Milwaukee County Park System

The day begins with a spring hike through an upland oak hickory forest where towering trees stand watch over a cascade of ephemeral wildflowers. Bird song filters down from the treetops and frog calls erupt from ephemeral ponds glistening in a new day's sun. This day's hike could have easily started by walking through prairie grasslands on the bluffs of Lake Michigan with a humbling view of the lake that extends to the horizon where water and sky entwine into a singular sense of blue. Your trance is only broken by the fluttering bobolinks in their little tuxedos and the fluid calls of meadowlarks singing from the peripheral grasslands. Welcome to just two of the natural areas found within the Milwaukee County Parks.



It is a park system rich in history, diversity, and immense natural beauty. Out of the park system's 15,500 acres, slightly over 10,000 acres are managed as part of its Natural Areas Program. These are natural areas that run the gamut of woodlands (Beech-Maple Forest, Oak-Hickory Woodlands, Lowland Hardwood Forest), grasslands (remnant prairie, oak savanna, surrogate



grasslands) and wetlands (shallow marsh, clay bank fens, sedge meadows, and shallow lakes). Floristically, there are nearly 700 species of plants within these natural areas, which also contain countless species of wildlife both breeding and migrating during the yearly lifecycles.

These natural areas are places where citizens can find solitude and peace within hectic urban lives. To facilitate this experience the Natural Areas Program with the assistance of its essential volunteers and partner organizations recently finished installing a 40-mile natural areas hiking trail system that is ecologically sustainable and community enriching. While using these trails visitors can often see the other activities undertaken to preserve and nurture these natural gems. Techniques such as invasive species removal, habitat management, reforestation, and natural resource monitoring are always on going by staff or the thousands of volunteers (6,900 volunteers donating 40,000 hours from 2009-2011). These natural areas are a community resource and we are happy to say that the Milwaukee County community has been very involved with their care.

To learn more about the Natural Areas Program, how you can become involved, or where you can hike please contact the Natural Areas Coordinator (Brian Russart) at [brian.Russart@milwcnty.com](mailto:brian.Russart@milwcnty.com) or 414-257-6521.

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