



VRPA Advocate

Issue 92

Vermont Recreation & Parks Association

Fall 2018

VRPA President's Perspective

Melissa Cate, CPRP,
VRPA President



This summer, for the first time since I was a young kid, I caught a fish, not just one fish, but a whole bunch of fish! The thrill of doing so reminded me of how important it

is to try new things – and particularly how invigorating these new things can be when done in the great outdoors. While summer in the parks and recreation world is always busy, this year I had the luxury of quite a few fun excursions – a Cape Cod vacation with two girlfriends, my daughter's college orientation & drop-off in Washington DC, a weekend at a friend's camp in Jay Peak, concerts and parties in Massachusetts and NH and an unforgettable family reunion in Maine. It was at this family reunion, in the far northeast region of Maine, that I visited one of the most pristine and spectacular areas I have ever been lucky enough to experience. During this trip we spent time fishing for small mouth bass, picnicking on the shoreline and celebrating the life of my stepfather who passed away this winter. Separated from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, our group aged 7-79, was able to enjoy time together outside, splashing in the rain puddles, swimming in the lake, sunning, talking, laughing and, of course, fishing. It truly was a gift of time that we were all so grateful for – and it emphasized how essential it is to take a break, relax and just be in the present.

While this summer has provided me time for personal growth and recreation, I am excited that fall brings several opportunities for professional growth

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10 Ways to Make the Most Out of a Conference

By Kate C. Farrar

(Look for the extra tips in italics for attending our upcoming 75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation.)

Attending conferences might be one of the best things you can do for your career. You'll learn about industry trends, gain some new skills, and make all kinds of new connections.



contacts, and conversations can also be overwhelming. Besides bringing boatloads of business cards and collecting them from other people, what else should you be planning on when you have an event coming up? From prepping beforehand to having a great time while you're there, here's what you need to know to make the most of your next conference.

But all those speakers, sessions,

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Promoting Parks & Recreation's Role in Economic Development

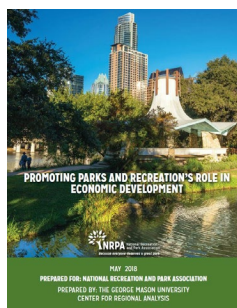
A Report from the National Recreation & Park Association

This report was prepared for the National Recreation & Park Association by the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis in May of this year. Here you will find the Executive Summary of the report. For a copy of the full report, follow this [LINK](#) to the NRPA website.

This study follows up on previous NRPA research on the economic importance of local parks and the role that these assets play in regional economic development in the 21st century. This current study identifies how local parks officials can better engage with those in the economic development community who can become important external allies by helping park and recreation leaders defend budgets, promote new initiatives and create more

engaged constituencies. The study is based on conversations with more than 70 park and recreation leaders, economic development practitioners and site-selection consultants.

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VRPA Newsletter

The VRPA Advocate is published three times a year by the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome, including commentary on subjects of interest to Vermont's recreation professionals and volunteers.

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VRPA Calendar of Events

2018

Sep 25-27	NRPA Conference, Indianapolis
Oct 10-11	75th VT Recreation Conference, Lake Morey
Nov 15	Performance Showcase, Lake Morey
TBD	December Quarterly Meeting

2019

Jan 8-10	Northern NE Rec Conference, North Conway, NH
TBD	March Quarterly Meeting
Mar 26-27	Certified Pool Operator Course

VRPA Mission:

Provide training and resources to help Vermonters to

“Create Community through People, Parks and Programs.”

Message from the Executive Director

Well, the summer has come and gone now, and what a summer it was. I will admit that I struggled with the heat at times but watching my garden grow made it worth it...almost. Because I had the ability to water, this was the best garden I have ever had. The swiss chard was up to my knees and the tomatoes grew over my head. If you are a gardener, this is pretty exciting.



and group BBQ grill or volunteering some time on the project work days. You can go to the VRPA website for the link to donate or contact Melissa at mcate@burlingtonvt.gov to volunteer. A ribbon cutting celebration is planned for Wednesday at 5:00pm, just prior to the Exhibit Hall opening, and we hope you will plan to attend.

Along with gardening, I have been extra busy getting ready for this year's state recreation conference, the 75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation. Anniversaries are such a good excuse to plan a party and celebrate the good work done before us. This year's conference committee has been on both those tasks for nearly a year now and anxiously awaits October 10th and 11th at Lake Morey Resort. This is not the conference to miss... hopefully you are already registered to attend but if you aren't, you might want to stop reading this and go to www.vrpa.org to read through the conference brochure. With 29 different sessions and 41 speakers, we have worked hard to ensure that there are multiple education sessions of interest to everyone and every interest group. Our annual conference is the best opportunity of the year to network in addition to all the great education sessions.

Back to that anniversary conference celebration...we have three special legacy projects planned, (1) a park build project at the Fairlee Town Beach, (2) inviting all the past Brungardt Award winners to the awards luncheon, and (3) a written history of the conference by decade in the context of other state and national parks and recreation history.

The park build project had its origin at last year's conference when incoming VRPA President, Melissa Cate, was out for a morning walk. She noticed an old playground structure down by a creek bed and when we were back at Lake Morey for the Performance Showcase, we revisited the site and started asking questions. The Town of Fairlee was interested in our idea and the rest is history thanks to generous donations from several of our members – thank you all! There is still an opportunity to participate either by donating to the [GoFundMe](#) campaign to purchase a wheelchair accessible picnic table

Theresa Brungardt started this conference 75 years ago and in celebration of her contributions to parks and recreation in Vermont and nationally, the Theresa S. Brungardt Awards were created in 1975 to recognizing outstanding service to parks and recreation in Vermont. All 125 past award recipients have been invited to be our guests at this year's Awards Luncheon and so far, we have 41 people planning to attend. This in addition to again having members of Mrs. Brungardt's family and Governor Scott with us should make for an extra special Awards Luncheon.

Conference Committee member and PhD parks and recreation historian Muriel More, has made an extraordinary effort with all this legacy work. We had all but two of the past 74 conference brochures and Muriel scoured through all of them to create a brief history of the Vermont conference. This special written history will be unveiled at the conference and everyone will receive a printed copy.

It has been an honor to work with the Conference Committee to plan this special anniversary conference. This is one of the oldest recreation conferences in the country and it is time to celebrate the important role that parks and recreation plays here in Vermont and has played for decades. I can't wait!

In preparation for a very busy Fall, I managed to finish summer with a week on Prince Edward Island – it was quite a drive but what a fantastic getaway with family and friends. That is where I caught the cod that you see me kissing in the picture. I hope you had a good summer and that a vacation was part of it.

I look forward to seeing you at the conference in October!

Betsy

Betsy Terry, CPRP
VRPA Executive Director

Diana Wood – Marketing & Outreach Manager at Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront

By Betsy Terry, CPRP

After working for many years in the for-profit world, mostly in the toy business, Diana Wood was looking for ways to put her skills and education to use to actually improve people's lives and the planet. When she discovered the job posting for the City of Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Marketing position, she thought, "this seems like a great fit!" After three years on the job, she knows she was right. Diana recently shared with me, "As a firm believer in the "power of play" and the benefits of public parks, I can't think of a better way to spend most of my waking hours supporting our department's mission."

Prior to coming to Burlington, Diana's work experience had been as a graphic designer and art director for toy companies including Toys"R"Us, Hasbro and International Playthings. In Vermont she also held positions at Turtle Fur in Morrisville and Hampton Direct in Williston. Wow, what a great find for



Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront.

About her greatest career accomplishments, Diana said "I take pride turning around intense projects on time. Nothing like an impossible deadline to provide motivation!"

Diana admits that making the transition from her career as a graphic designer to marketer was challenging. After she completed her MBA (Master's Degree in Business Administration), she had the

education but no official work experience to put on her resume. She put her skills into action as a volunteer and through the Rotary Club where her skills, willingness to work hard, and ability to meet deadlines, were welcomed. She says, "This experience really helped me feel confident in executing marketing and social media plans."

It wasn't only the Rotary Club that has benefited from Diana's volunteer work. Diana is

my go-to person when we need something designed. Two recent examples of her design contributions to VRPA include the special 75th conference logo and the conference history piece that everyone will be receiving at the conference. We are so lucky that Diana is willing to share her time and graphic arts skills with us!

I first met Diana soon after she joined the Burlington staff. I was on the board of the Vermont Senior Games Association (VSGA) and we needed some help creating a poster with the schedule of Games events for that year. I called her and asked if she would be willing to do this for the VSGA. She said sure, created a great Games poster and soon after joined the board of the VSGA where she now serves as secretary, volunteers at several VSGA events every year, and is the VSGA in-house graphic artist. She is also an athlete and participated in the last two VSGA triathlons held in partnership with the Colchester Triathlon.

In her spare time, she enjoys running, swimming, biking, horseback riding, yoga, skiing, hiking, camping, gardening, art, music, history & culture, and pets. She shares life with her husband Doug Babcock, step children and lots of pets.

She enjoys being part of our association because VRPA gives her the opportunity to meet other local parks professionals that understand the special qualities of the state, local municipalities and Vermonters. She shared, "The organization also gives me opportunities to grow professionally by getting involved in the conference and other events."

Professional advice from lessons learned over the years? "Communication is key! Clear directions and sharing of information make everyone's job easier!" Great advice.



Here's an example of Diana's branding work on the Leddy Arena Zamboni.

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Dog Days of Summer

By Kirsten Santor, CPRP, Program Director-Community Recreation, EJRP



Essex Junction Recreation and Parks recently won a contest to be on the cover of the July issue of the nationally distributed Parks and Recreation magazine, and that got people wondering-what is dog day all about? This year marks the 7th annual Essex Dog Days of Summer. The event happens every year in August on the day after the pool closes for the summer. That part is key as the pool gets shut down completely before dogs start swimming, so the filters don't get clogged.

Over the years the event has had a few different components. Sometimes there are pet-related vendors and demonstrations, such as the Disc Dogs or a visit from a K9 unit. For a brief stint Dog Day consisted only of the pool event, which is the most popular aspect of the day. Right at noon on Dog Day you will

find a line down the sidewalk in front of the rec office of dogs ready to swim. Five dollars is collected for every dog and humans enter for free. All proceeds go directly to the West Street Dog Park in Essex. Interestingly the past few years has also brought a number of people that just come to watch the event without a dog-it's great entertainment!

Once patrons are inside the gate, it is an off-leash heaven. Dogs have free reign of the kiddie pool, lap lanes, and diving well. Some four-legged friends enjoy splashing around in the small pool while other brave souls can be seen trying their luck on the diving boards. Dogs are encouraged to bring their toys if they're okay sharing them and the rec department supplies a basket of tennis balls for everyone to enjoy.

During the dog swim, the atmosphere on the pool deck becomes that of organized chaos. Dogs are running around everywhere, making new doggie friends, chasing balls, and happily shaking off next to their dry humans. There is a wonderful joy in seeing dogs that happy and it is truly remarkable how smoothly our four legged friends get along with each other.

This year promises to be our most exciting as we collaborate with the



Vermont Dog Club to offer informational sessions; a dog show featuring categories such as "most fluffy" and "best barker"; a best trick contest; and a bobbing for hot dogs competition! In addition, we'll have vendors with giveaways, a Disc Dog demonstration, a dog jog 5k, and a photobooth. The day kicks off with the dog jog at 11am and everything else from 12-2pm. For more info on the event check out the event page on: facebook.com/EJRec



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Getting Stuff Done in Milton

By Kym Duchesneau, Milton Recreation Coordinator

It sure has been a busy and rewarding summer in Milton! After years of planning, studying, preparing and saving, the Town of Milton Recreation Department was excited and proud to see many wonderful enhancements to our Park finally come to fruition.

Bombardier Park is nestled behind the Milton Municipal Complex and its recreational fields and trails cover over 185 acres with Cobble Hill on the horizon to the south and Georgia Mountain to the north.

For the past 30+ years, the beautiful, ever-bustling Park has featured baseball and softball fields, multipurpose playing fields, two playgrounds, a large picnic pavilion, horseshoe pits, tennis/pickleball courts, a bandshell, basketball court/ice rink, volleyball court, an extensive trail network, and a heavily used restroom facility located in the center of the Park.

As is the case in countless parks in every city and town throughout Vermont and the nation, Bombardier Park is frequented by community members and visitors alike everyday all year round and, with all of this use and enjoyment over the years, there were several aspects of our Park that were in desperate need of repair. Graciously, in 2013, Milton voters approved a ½ Penny for Parks reserve fund that allowed Milton Recreation, the Recreation Commission and the Selectboard to put a plan in motion to make improvements to these very important community resources.

Early this spring, Milton's basketball court/ice rink was revitalized to include new backboards and nets, painting and sealing of surface, new basketball court lines plus hopscotch and four-square, new ice rink curbing, and benches. We were honored to be awarded a State of Vermont Recreational Facilities Grant to help fund this project.

In June, the Milton Artists Guild, in collaboration with a Milton Promise Community grant, enlisted the expertise of a professional muralist to lead the way in painting murals on all eight dugouts in the Park. The muralist outlined the murals in paint-by-number fashion and community

members of all ages descended on the Park on a Saturday morning to paint up a storm. The results? Breathtaking.

Shortly thereafter, a rising Eagle Scout raised funds and gathered a crew to paint the remaining sides, interior and trim of each dugout which really makes the murals pop, gave the structures new life and ties the whole Park together.

Beginning in May, amid all of these other Park improvements and after years of meetings and planning and setting funds aside, Milton's restroom building (now called the Fieldhouse in Bombardier Park West) was completely renovated and has truly been transformed into the "Eye of the Park". The cinderblock building was previously home to a maintenance garage, 30+ year old restrooms, a small room for summer camp and a mish mash of storage space. The completely renovated and reconfigured three-season building now hosts brand new restroom facilities, outdoor water bottle filling station, a lighted cupola, message board kiosk, a large summer camp space which can also be used as a community room for meetings, programs, events and for folks to rent for gatherings, plus an outdoor picnic pavilion and an upstairs attic space for Recreation storage.



*Celebrating success with a ribbon-cutting ceremony
(Photo credit: Held In The Moment Photography)*

Proudly, Milton Recreation, working closely with several other Town of Milton departments, strived to enlist the help of local Milton contractors and vendors whenever possible which was wonderful. On August 7th, a dedication ceremony and ribbon cutting was held at the Fieldhouse to recognize all of the amazing contractors, vendors, volunteers, businesses, community partners, residents, Town staff, and others who helped make a difference throughout this summer and the years leading up to this point in making these Park enhancement dreams come together. Our current motto in Milton? We are "Getting Stuff Done."



This is one of 8 new murals on the ballfield dugouts.



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10 Ways to Make the Most Out of a Conference (continued)

Before the Conference

1. Gain Visibility - A great way to maximize your conference experience is to participate in some way—like being a presenter, session facilitator, or committee volunteer. (When you see the initial posting for the conference, check out if there are these options available, or email the conference organizer directly to ask.) While you're there, you'll be among hundreds or thousands of other participants, but if you can take on a visible role, that's an easy way to set yourself apart from the crowd. (*We'll be looking for room moderators and you can choose a session you plan to be attending; contact Kym Duchesneau at kduchesneau@miltonvt.gov.*)

2. Build Stronger Relationships - A conference is the time to meet new people, but it's also a time to build on the relationships you already have. If you know of people you want to reconnect with or get to know better who will be attending—colleagues, vendors, friends-of-friends—reach out a few weeks before the conference to set up a time to meet for coffee or a meal while you're at the event.

At the Conference

3. Get Briefed - A lot of conferences try to be extra welcoming to newbies and will host a first-timers briefing. You definitely want to build this type of session into your schedule—not only to get the scoop on things, but also to meet other participants who, just like you, are a little uncertain and looking to form some new relationships. (*If you are new to our conference, plan to sit at one of the topic tables at lunch on the first day of the conference.*)

4. Choose the Right Sessions - At most conferences, there will be an abundance of sessions to choose from—many more than you'll be able to attend! So, when you're plotting your schedule, take a look at the conference as a whole. Look at all the sessions and events you're interested in, then make sure you're getting to attend a range of topics, skill-building sessions, and social events, and still allowing for some down time. And if you find yourself in a session that isn't quite what you thought

it was going to be, don't feel bad about skipping out and going to a different one. A conference is all about using your time wisely and getting the most out of all that's there. (*Plan to study the conference brochure and create your schedule before you get to the conference and coordinate your sessions with the co-workers from your department; you can share what you learned with each other on the ride home.*)

5. Remember What You Learn - With days full of speakers and sessions, there's a lot to take in—and you're probably not going to remember all of it when you get home. So, collect your notes and information in a way that makes it easy to access when you return to the office. Regardless of your note-taking format of choice (pen and paper, laptop, tablet, smartphone), at the end of each session you attend, write down the three key takeaways and any follow-up you want to do on the topic or with the speakers. This will help jog your memory and give you specific to-dos when you get back to work.

6. Connect with the Speakers - The speakers and panelists at any conference are likely key experts in your field. Don't be afraid to ask questions or hang around (even as the last person) at a session to say hello, tell them you loved the presentation, and grab their business cards. And if you don't get a chance to ask your question in person, you can always follow up by asking them on Twitter.

7. Schmooze at the Social Events - Definitely make time to attend the conference's social events—they're a great opportunity to connect with people in a more relaxed setting. (Hint: These events are often more important than the sessions!) And don't be afraid to linger even if the event is over—you don't want cut off a great conversation with someone just to be on time to your next session.

8. Put Away the Smartphone - You may be thinking: "But—I have so many emails waiting!" or "They told me to tweet about the event!" But here's the thing: You're at a conference to have in-person interaction, and you don't want your electronic devices to be a barrier to making those

connections. So, while you don't have to disconnect completely, put the phone away when you're waiting for a workshop to begin or taking a break at the coffee bar, and give yourself a chance to strike up conversations with the other attendees around you.

After the Conference

9. Friendly Follow-up - At the conference, you were collecting business cards, new Facebook friends, and Twitter followers. Afterward, it's time to do something with them. Within a week of returning from the event, send a personal follow-up to everyone you met to let them know you enjoyed meeting them. Also set up a phone call or face-to-face meeting with anyone you specifically want to do business or build a relationship with.

10. Pay it Forward - You gained a lot of new information, inspiration, and contacts at the conference, and one of the best things you can do with those resources is to share them with your fellow co-workers, colleagues, and friends. Send out videos of the sessions you thought were particularly valuable, give a talk about something you learned at your next staff meeting, and tell your boss about some of the interesting contacts you met. You'll spread your new skills and knowledge—and hopefully your colleagues will reciprocate the next time they go to a great event.

This article was gleaned from the web; written by Kate C. Farrar and posted on The Muse. Kate Farrar spends her day as the Director of the AAUW (American Association of University Women) Leadership Programs. Her role is to ensure college women assume leadership roles and acquire the skills they need to succeed in their academic, professional, and personal lives. She's proudly spent her post-college career as an ex-pat in London, a lobbyist "for good", a national park employee, an intense graduate student, a giddy presidential campaign organizer, and a women's org nonprofiteer. You can follow her musings on Twitter @kcfarrar.



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75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation



Wednesday, October 10

8:30a	Registration Opens
9a-12:15p	Education Sessions
9a-12p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun, Tricks, & Timersavers Using Microsoft Excel • Marketing Strategy From Practical to Practically Insane • MyRec.com Recreation Software User Group
9-10:30a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generational Diversity: What to Expect from the Gen Zs & How to Help Them be More Effective • Vermont Parks that Honor History & Inspire the Future
10:40a-12:10p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would You Like to Run an Inspiring Meeting? • New Paradigm in Recreation Planning: Vermont Town Focus
12-12:45p	Lunch
12:45-1:45p	Keynote - Adrian Benepe, Sr VP, The Trust for Public Land
2-4:30p	Education Sessions
2-4:30p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative Recreation Programming • RecTrac User Group • Fun & Games
2-3:10p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20th Anniversary of a Landscape Weed Management Program • Roundtables (5 Topics - Choose One) • The Barnes Camp Accessibility Project • Integrated Pest Management - Real Estate
5p	Ribbon Cutting - Lake Morey 20th Anniversary Project at Fairlee Town Beach
5:30-7p	Backyard Games & Dinners with the Exhibitors
5p	Music provided by the Frozen Finger Boys
5p	75th Anniversary Fireworks over Lake Morey

We hope you will plan to attend both days of the conference but if that isn't possible, you have the option to select a single day registration for Wednesday or Thursday.

Thursday, October 11

6:45-7:45a	Sunrise Walk Along Lake Morey: Out & Back in Time for the 1st Season
6:45-8:45a	Sunrise Walk Along Lake Morey: With the 1st Season Around the Lake
7-9a	Breakfast Buffet
7:30a	Registration Opens
8:30-11a	Education Sessions
8:30-9:40a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on a Shredding Budget • Leadership Inspires Greatness in Today's Parks & Recreation Industry • Face the River: Changing How We View Rivers • Multi-Use Trails - Showing Us How to Pleased • Capacity Issues - How to Deal with them from Becoming Loved to Death • Designing a Park for the Future • VRPA's Role in Quality Through Outdoor Recreation • The Future of Recreation in an Evolving Industry
11a-12p	Lunch
12:15-1:30p	Remarks Luncheon, Governor Phil Scott (Invited)
1:45-3:30p	Education Sessions
1:45-3:30p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Past is Prologue: The Legacy & Vision of Theresa S. Brungart • Creative Placemaking • DIY Techniques to Strengthen Public Spaces and Inspire Change • The Power of Playability • Wild Heart of Place: Inspiring Community Engagement • Let's Connect - An Active Play Session
3-3:30p	Auction Final Bidding

3 | Honoring the Past & Inspiring the Future

Sometimes the Best-Laid Plans Have to Change - Charlie McCabe, Director for City Park Excellence at the Trust for Public Land, to be Keynote Speaker at the 75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation

By Betsy Terry, CPRP

With the Trust for Public Land in the middle of a very large reorganization, it turns out that Adrian Benepe needs to be elsewhere on October 10th as part of their enlarged focus on the 10-Minute Walk campaign. He sent his sincere regrets and one of his top-level colleagues, Charlie McCabe, Director of City Park Excellence at the Trust for Public Land, to fill in. He went on to tell me that "Charlie is one of the nation's great experts on parks and PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships), and, as head of their Center for City Park Excellence, oversees ParkScore and City Park Facts--no one is more knowledgeable about parks and park trends. I have also seen Charlie speak around the country, and he is great--inspiring, personable, charming, interesting, and possessed of great sense of humor."

Charlie McCabe's role overseeing the creation of the annual ParkScore® Index and annual City Park Facts reports includes data collection and analysis, benchmarking analyses and producing evaluations of city-wide park systems as well as the hundreds of attributes that are tracked. Charlie researches, writes, and publishes journalistic articles on current urban park issues and makes presentations on the state of city park systems, including Boston, Atlanta and Austin. Prior to joining the Trust for Public Land in January 2017, Charlie had worked for a decade in a



number of parks non-profits in Austin, New York and Boston in roles ranging from Director of Public Programs to Executive Director. He holds an MS from Pratt Institute and a BA from Colby College and is an avid hiker, biker and trail builder. A trail builder – sounds like he will fit right in here in Vermont. The Conference Committee welcomes Charlie McCabe as our keynote speaker.

I asked Charlie to give us a sneak preview of his keynote...

The Trust for Public Land has been analyzing and reporting on city parks

systems since 2000 and we're pleased to share some of the lessons and examples that we have compiled during that time. For example, in our 100 largest U. S. cities (holding just over 20 percent of the U. S. population) we know that we have 22,764 public parks encompassing over 2.1 million acres of land. 70 percent of the population of those 100 largest U. S. cities live within a 10-minute walk (less than one-half mile) from one or more of those parks.

In my presentation I will give an overview of how park systems have grown in those last 18 years, what features and amenities get the biggest attention from visitors (as well as the press), how collaboration with public agencies, parks non-profits and volunteers can help build communities through parks systems and how park usage changes over time. We'll then talk about some of the newer park and trail projects in cities large and small, and talk about some of the collaboration taking place in communities across the United States. And we will talk about pickleball (708 courts and growing) and dog parks (775 off-leash dog parks and growing).

We look forward to having Charlie McCabe with us for his keynote address at the 75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation on Wednesday, October 10th at Lake Morey Resort.

75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation (continued)

Conference Exhibit Hall an Important Part of the Conference Experience

Meeting face-to-face with the exhibitors is an important part of the conference experience. Spending time in the exhibit hall provides you with the opportunity to re-connect with vendors you are already using and to meet potential new ones. These commercial partners can show you new technologies and products that can dramatically improve your efficiency and enhance your work.

We challenge you to meet with every exhibitor and we'll make it worth your while to try! At both the Wednesday night and Thursday morning exclusive exhibit hall times, lucky conference attendees will win \$50 and \$100 VISA cards and Silent Auction gift certificates...you must be present to win. You'll be getting a raffle ticket from each of the exhibitors you visit and won't know which exhibitor basket the winning tickets will be drawn from... so plan to visit them all! Go to homepage of www.vrpa.org for the exhibitor brochure and a link to the online exhibitor registration.


Here's a sneak preview of the exhibitors you will have a chance to talk with at this year's conference:

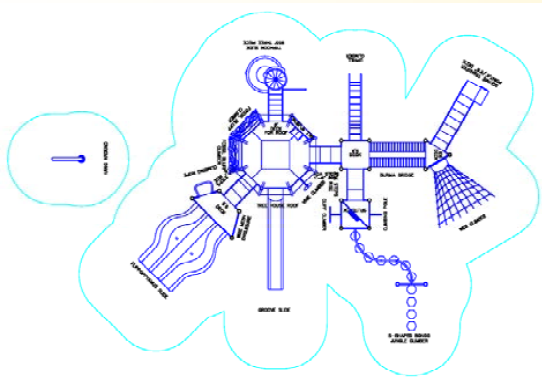
Allen Pools & Spas
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VT Association of Snow Travelers (VAST)
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A few spaces are still available in the Exhibit Hall. If you are interested in being an exhibitor, don't delay...the Exhibit Hall was sold out last year and we expect it will be this year too.

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Promoting Parks & Recreation's Role in Economic Development (continued)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parks and recreation support environmental stewardship and promote health and wellness in communities across the United States. Less appreciated are these agencies' many contributions to economic prosperity. Park and recreation agencies employ hundreds of thousands of people while their operations and capital spending generate significant economic activity. Moreover, local parks shape perceptions of and enhance the quality of life in communities.

This study builds on previous NRPA research on the economic importance of local park and recreation agencies by exploring the role that quality park amenities play in 21st century regional economic development. It reviews the impact that a community's quality of life has on its ability to attract and retain business and a talented workforce. This report also identifies opportunities where local parks officials can better engage with their communities' economic development entities.

Key findings of this report include:

Parks and recreation is an engine of substantial economic activity in communities.

- Parks and recreation departments are significant employers in cities and towns. Their operations and capital spending generate positive impacts that ripple through local economies.
- Local parks shape perceptions of a community and its overall quality of life that help build a sense of place.
- Investments in improving a community's quality of life can create a virtuous cycle: high quality-of-life locations attract workers, which attract employers, which in turn attract even more investment and jobs.

Quality-of-life considerations (including those made possible by high-quality parks and recreation) play a supporting role in site-location decisions. For some companies, high-quality park amenities can be pivotal in their final location decisions.

- Quality-of-life factors are most important to firms that prioritize talent attraction and retention.
 - Firms looking to locate office operations (e.g., headquarters, regional shared-service centers or professional and business services) and which recruit employees regionally, nationally or even internationally, are more likely to prioritize quality-of-life factors in site-location decisions.
- Small- and medium-sized, entrepreneurial or family-owned companies often want to locate in places

that reflect their corporate culture or values.

- This includes companies that emphasize outdoor recreation—either because they specifically produce/sell products for that market or their brand is well aligned with an active outdoor lifestyle.

Park and recreation agencies contribute to the economic development process through:

- Business attraction: Park and recreation agencies strengthen product development (e.g., building trail infrastructure) and enhance community "curb appeal."
- Business retention and expansion: Active engagement with companies and workers can influence business expansion decisions and attract new residents to a community.
- Talent attraction: Many business owners are first introduced to places as visitors or tourists; positive recreational experiences can influence both business and talent recruitment.

Park and recreation leaders—the agency director and senior leadership team—can become more involved in their region's economic development planning and activities by building new alliances to promote the value of parks and recreation. Key players that offer opportunities for new partnerships include:

- Economic development organizations (EDOs)
- Civic booster organizations like chambers of commerce and convention and visitors' bureaus (CVBs)
- Other municipal departments that shape quality of life (e.g., public schools, public libraries and transit agencies)
- Shapers of the built environment (e.g., private sector developers, downtown development organizations, business improvement districts and metropolitan planning organizations)
- Regional and neighboring

park and recreation agencies and private nonprofit competitors (e.g., YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs)

The business and economic development communities can be powerful advocates for park and recreation departments.

But there is also a need for an engaged citizenry.

- Engaged citizens actively work to shape the policy positions of local elected officials, and reliably vote for bond initiatives or the creation of special tax districts.
- Engaged citizens who understand and promote how park and recreation amenities improve a region's quality of life can raise the profile of a park agency's contributions to economic development.

Park and recreation departments must provide evidence of their value.

- Park and recreation leaders should identify persuasive metrics that speak to the role and contributions that their agencies make to business attraction and retention (e.g., number of bike commuters, jobs in the community filled by community residents or number of companies that use park and recreation facilities and programs).
- Compelling anecdotes can further illustrate these impacts and help put a face on the data..

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State Track Meet

Under sunny skies, the 2018 VRPA – St. Johnsbury Academy State Track Meet was held on Saturday, July 21st. A very special thank you to our facility host, St. Johnsbury Academy, for providing a great facility and countless skilled meet officials and volunteers and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont for providing a meet t-shirt to every athlete and volunteer. 301 athletes participated and gave it their all. Several meet records were broken.



2018 VRPA – St. Johnsbury Academy State Track Meet Results

Large Community – 1st Place: St. Johnsbury and 2nd Place: Champlain Valley
Small Community – 1st Place: Montpelier and 2nd Place: Hartford



State Track Meet (continued)



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Boost Your Marketing Power with Storytelling

Storytelling is an essential and ancient part of human communication. Before the advent of writing, detailed stories were told orally, passed from generation to generation. Stories hold meaning for cultures, reflecting their histories, beliefs, and customs. We tell stories to learn, build relationships, and make sense of the world around us.

In fact, our brains are programmed to recognize patterns and find meaning in those patterns. A story is a kind of pattern, and stories are an effective marketing tool that you can use to build connection with your audience. There are good stories, and then there are great stories, the ones we remember. But what makes a compelling, memorable story?

Elements of an Effective Story

1) Be Memorable with Emotion - Facts and figures are essential to marketing—you need data to understand and relay your progress, as well as understand the state of your business. But numbers alone don't inspire strong emotions. According to communications specialist Rob Biesenbach, **63% of people remember stories, but only 5% remember statistics.** There's science behind this notion as well. When we are exposed to facts, two

parts of our brains are activated, to take in information and to process. On the other hand, a story activates several areas across the entire brain. And, these areas aren't just accepting information—they're *experiencing* the story. Think of the last book you read. Maybe the main character slipped into a cool lake on a scorching hot day or felt full of fear before giving an important speech. Did you feel the relief of that cool water, or find yourself growing anxious on behalf of the character? That's the power of a good story. And it reflects the fact that when we hear a story and when we have a physical experience, the same areas of our brains are activated—the brain doesn't differentiate between a story and an experience.

2) Know the Emotions of your Customer - Stories can be emotional in and of themselves, so that most of us who

hear the story feel the same emotions. You can also tap into your potential customer's emotions by telling a story you know will resonate with a specific fear or desire they are experiencing. Say Sally has always wanted to play the piano. You're selling a system that will help your customers learn to play the piano fast, efficiently, and well. You can tell a story with the main character flawlessly playing a piece on the piano, finishing to a round of applause. Poise your product as the solution to that specific fear or desire in the story, and potential customers will be flocking to your brand.

3) Show Your Unique Side - Unless you're selling a never-before-seen product, you've got competition. And even if your business is exclusive in what

continued Pg. 15



For more information:



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Boost Your Marketing Power (continued)

you offer, you're still competing against countless other businesses and products for a consumer's spending dollars. Why should a potential customer choose you? Stories help you out here. Even if your business offers the same services as several others, only yours has your unique story. Telling the story of how you founded your company, developed your product, or helped a customer shows the special, human side of your business that separates you from the crowd and helps you connect with consumers on a personal, human level.

4) Inspire Action! - When we feel positive emotions, we want to do what we can to ensure those feelings continue. And when we feel negative emotions, like anger or fear, we want to act as soon as possible to stop those feelings. Because stories can make us emotional, they can also spur us to action. If your story inspires relief in consumers—*finally*, here is a solution to my problem—they'll want to act to obtain that relief as soon as possible. They may have been searching for this solution for a long time. But your story raises the stakes—act NOW and your problem will disappear. Stories also make us more likely to act because they can increase the perceived value of a product. A study called the Significant Objects Project found that when inexpensive items were marketed along with a story, the perceived worth of the objects increased, and buyers were willing to pay more for them than the object itself was worth. In this experiment, the purchasers knew the stories weren't true—even still, the narrative gave buyers more of a reason to purchase.

5) Connect with Values - Consumers, especially Millennials, make purchase decisions as extensions of their values and identity. If a company doesn't align with those values, consumers are more likely than ever to look elsewhere for their needs. When you tell your story, you have a great opportunity to highlight what is important to you, what your company stands for, and your ultimate goals. Whatever those goals may be, they'll likely resonate with a specific audience. This makes them more likely to purchase from you and to feel a greater connection to your business.

6) Make Use of Visuals - A story is built on compelling words. But sometimes, words aren't enough. A captivating visual can say a lot, which is why the best stories make use of words and visuals to convey a message. Whether you're talking about a specific individual, event, or circumstance, make sure to include visuals relevant to the story.

7) Personalize - It helps to tell your story from a particular point of view, whether it's your own, someone in a similar situation as your potential customer, or someone who was helped by your product. This helps to put a face to the issue. Your product may have helped thousands of consumers. But being able to put a face and truthful, personal words to it can make all the difference.



Posted on July 10, 2018 by Paw Print & Mail in South Burlington.

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in f t You Tube

Rutland's new swimming pools were up and running all summer - and what a great summer to have a new pool! Congratulations Rutland Recreation & Parks for all the hard work it takes to bring a project like this to completion.



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President's Perspective (cont'd)

and engagement. To kick off fall, the VRPA Executive Committee will hold our annual retreat—a time for us to develop our strategic plan and priorities for the coming year. We are always looking for new ideas on how to improve, grow and sustain our organization so I encourage all of our members to reach out to a board member if you have suggestions on how and what we should be focusing on.

I am very excited to be attending the NRPA Congress in Indianapolis this September. Inevitably this national conference re-energizes me and gets me focused on bigger picture issues. Having the opportunity to network and hear stories from around the country, from organizations big and small, is invaluable and there are always more education sessions that I want to attend than I ever have time for!

NRPA will be followed by our amazing 75th Vermont Conference on Recreation at Lake Morey on October 10-11th. I never miss this conference because, inevitably, the quality of presenters is on par with NRPA, for a fraction of the cost. Plus you get to spend a day or two with so many wonderful, creative and FUN parks and recreation professionals from across Vermont. This year marks the 75th annual conference and the conference committee has been working hard to make it extra special. I hope to connect with many of you there and to hear your stories of a summer well spent – maybe we can even compare fish tales!

Sincerely,

Melissa Cate, CPRP
VRPA President



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Recreational Trails Program (RTP) News

By Sherry Winnie, Recreation Trails Program Manager, VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation



The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) has awarded \$501,152 in Recreational Trails Program grants for (13) trail projects around Vermont, to the following communities and non-profit organizations for the trail work listed:

- \$12,064 to the Arlington Recreational and Park Committee, Inc. for restoration of the Arlington Recreation Park Walking Path.
- \$5,708 to Catamount Trail Association for Trail Counters and Blazes for placement along the 300-mile Catamount Trail, side trails, and backcountry zones;
- \$44,380 to Green Mountain Club for Bluff Mountain Trail Development (4.7 miles of new trail and 2.65 miles of maintenance to existing trail from Unknown Pond Trail to Pine Brook);
- \$43,975 to the Town of Killington for Phase III of its development of intermediate level mountain bike trails on both State and Federal land.
- \$50,000 to The Nature Conservancy for a new universally accessible trail, Raven Ridge Trail, in Monkton;
- \$7,378 to the Town of Milton for a new Lamaille River Walk Bridge;
- \$18,880 to the Middlebury Area Land Trust for upgrades to kiosk signage at 15 trailheads for the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM) & trail improvements at designated locations along the TAM;
- \$18,000 to Cross Vermont Trail Association for reconstruction of the Cross Vermont Trail along a section of old railbed in the towns of Newbury and Wells, VT;
- \$14,400 to Vermont Mountain Bike Association, the Mad River Riders Chapter, for drainage improvements and maintenance of the Blueberry Lake Trail Network (Lenord's Loop, Tootsie Roll, Flying Squirrel, and Gravel Grinder trails);
- \$24,000 to the Town of Pownal to construct two segments of a recreational trail for pedestrian uses and to delineate the trailhead parking area and add signage for trail use;

- \$19,950 to the Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association to develop and conduct a State Youth ATV Safety Course;
- \$48,000 to the Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association to restore (5) designated areas along a 4-mile stretch of the Stage Coach Trail in Woodford;
- \$194,417 to VAST for winter grooming of the statewide VAST trail system.

There are many outstanding statewide and local trail organizations, skillfully trained trail builders, and design firms performing top notch work in Vermont, many of whom showcased Vermont's trails during field trip sessions at this spring's conference in Burlington for the Society of

Outdoor Recreation Professionals. I'd like to acknowledge the importance of well planned projects and thank the planning professionals at the SE Group for their good work with the Mad River Valley Collaborative and development of the Vermont Town Forest Training Toolkit.

I'd also like to acknowledge the construction of universally accessible trails being built by Timber & Stone, LLC who last year constructed the universally accessible Barnes Camp Boardwalk at Smugglers Notch and is working this summer in the towns of Monkton and Milton constructing universally accessible trails into their town forests.

Vermont also has amazingly talented and dedicated volunteers and local trail

club members who maintain the trails they love to use. It is my hope to see those numbers double in one year.

Thanks to all our municipal recreation directors who have worked hard to make trail infrastructure part of their local community's socio-economic development. I am proud of you and proud to work for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation. It is nice to see the good work being done around the State by so many people who help maintain high quality trails for everyone to enjoy.

Enjoy the fall season, I hope to see you out on the trails!



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<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 staff	_____	\$375
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 or more staff	_____	\$485
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Professional	-- One --	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/> Board/Commission	_____	\$110
(Includes ALL board/commission members)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial (inc. link from VRPA website)	-- One --	\$180
<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree (check one)	-- One --	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Life	-- One --	Complimentary
<input type="checkbox"/> Check Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> Payment Being Mailed	Total Amount Due	\$ _____

New memberships received in the months of Nov, Dec and Jan are half price. *New memberships received in the last three months of our fiscal year (Feb, March and April) are full price and include the following year membership also.*

Would you like to become more involved with VRPA? Listed below are the various VRPA committees. Please check if you are interested and someone will contact you. Thank you for your interest!

- ☐ Membership ☐ Newsletter ☐ Performance Showcase ☐ Summerama ☐ Executive Committee
☐ Track & Field ☐ Awards ☐ Maintenance Workshop ☐ State Conference ☐ Northern NE Conference
☐ Other ways you'd like to help: _____

Is there a VRPA member who influenced your decision to join? Are you a member of NRPA? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 If yes, who? _____

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Or print this application and send to VRPA, 721 Main Street, Colchester, VT, 05446.
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