



CHARLESTON COUNTY PARK
& RECREATION COMMISSION

2013-2014
ANNUAL
REPORT





Message from the Executive Director

Dear Charleston County Park Residents:

In 2013 and 2014, Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC) intensified efforts to reach members of the community who may not visit our 10,000-acre park system on a regular basis. We want our facilities and services to be available to all. So in fiscal year 2013/2014, we identified a number of citizen groups not visiting their county parks, and put together a strategy for reaching them.



Tom O'Rourke

We found the identified citizen groups varied greatly in demographics, so different events and programs were created to accommodate them. For example, we welcomed members of the military returning home and integrating back into civilian life by hosting a day out at the Challenge Course at James Island County Park. And for residents with mental and/or physical disabilities, we developed AccessABILITY programs and events like the Adaptive Paddling Workshops and Special Needs Swim Night at Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark. We expanded outside our 10,000 acres by incorporating additional staff at the community centers and schools in the underserved areas of Hollywood, Ravenel, McClellanville, and Johns Island, and added The Genesis Project to *The Parklands Foundation's mission to raise money to build and maintain rural pools. We also transformed lives by forming the Employees with Disabilities Advisory Panel, to hire additional individuals with physical or cognitive limitations. (*See page 30)

We want people to “think outside the gym” and consider their parks as places to get fit by offering new outdoor classes for all levels of ability. We also expanded rental offerings for special celebrations to include properties like the Lake House at Bulow, Laurel Hill, and Old Towne Creek County Parks. We experienced the ground breaking of the McLeod Plantation Historic Site in fiscal year 2013/2014, and are planning for the grand opening this year to honor those who lived on the property, both free and enslaved.

Financially, CCPRC continues to hold an AAA Bond Rating by Moody's Investor Services, which represents the highest score possible. Our finances are structured into two parts: a General Fund, which is the main operating fund for administrative tasks; and the Enterprise Fund, which is designed to cover daily operational and maintenance expenses through user fees. It is from this latter financial structure that we continue to operate in a solid and secure financial state.

Our strategy was simple. We opened our arms and embraced underserved groups to get them into their parks. We created custom programming to meet the needs of these audiences. From July 2013 through June 2014, Charleston County Parks served more than 2 million patrons, which was up 11% year over year. This annual report highlights our efforts in reaching the community. It is our desire to serve all people of Charleston County, and beyond, and we thank you for the privilege to do so.

The mission of CCPRC is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. The large park system features over 10,000 acres of property and includes four land parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, a plantation, as well as wedding, meeting, and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services - festivals, camps, classes, programs, and much more.

Mission Statement

The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission will improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs, and services.

Core Values

Community Enrichment

Enriching lives through education and programs

Leadership

Providing professional staff development

Fun

Delivering fun to customers

Exceptional Customer Service

Always focusing on you

Health and Wellness

Providing and promoting healthy lifestyle opportunities

Quality

Striving for quality throughout the park system

Diversity

Fostering diverse populations of vendors, employees, and customers

Safety

Ensuring safe and secure environments

Accessibility

Providing accessibility through affordable options and a variety of offerings

Stewardship

Preserving and conserving cultural, natural, and historical resources

Building a Legacy

Maintaining a vision for the future while sustaining a healthy park system

CHARLESTON COUNTY PARK & RECREATION COMMISSIONERS



Benjy Cooke
Chair



Mattese Lecque
Vice-Chair



Andrew Thomas
Secretary-Treasurer



Lisa S. King



Ravi Sanyal



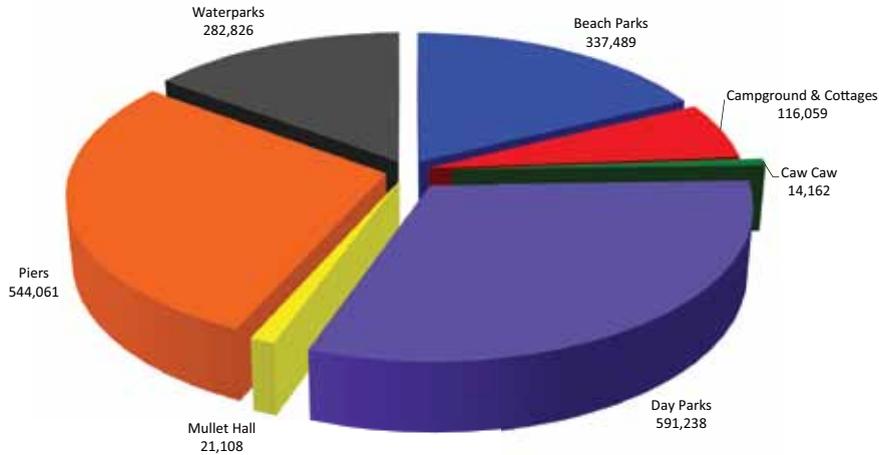
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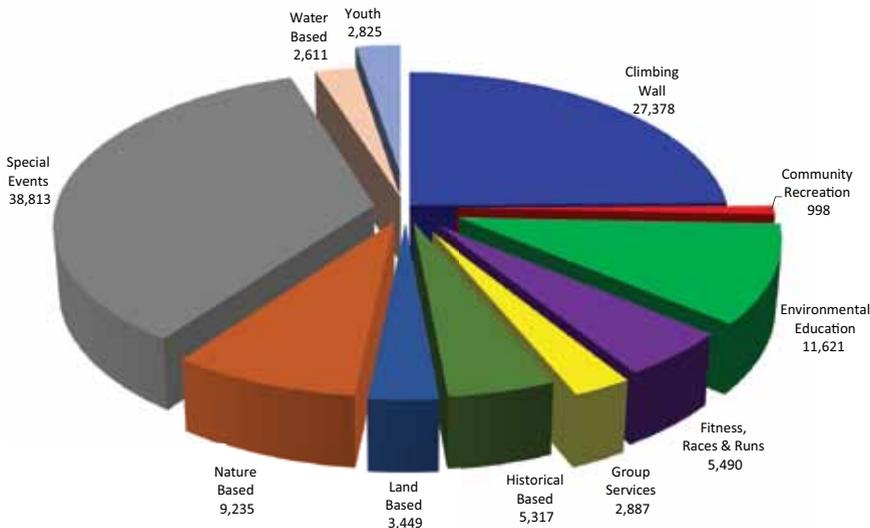
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Patrons at Play

Park & Facilities Attendance

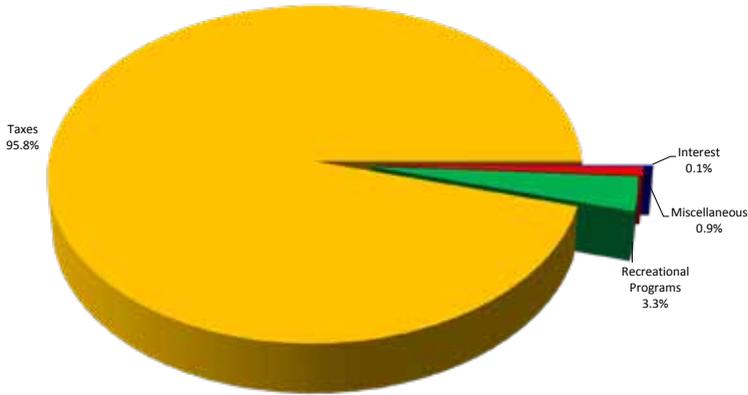


Special Events & Program Attendance

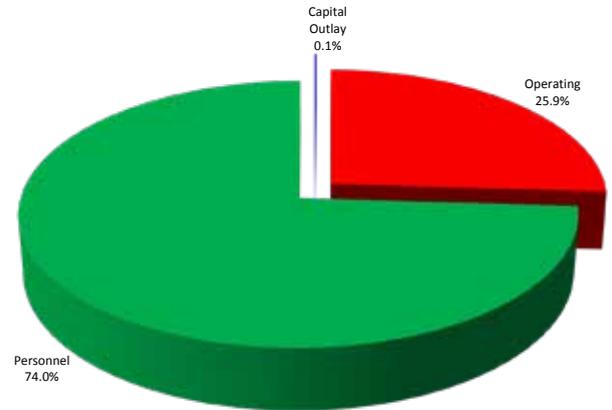


Your Dollars at Work

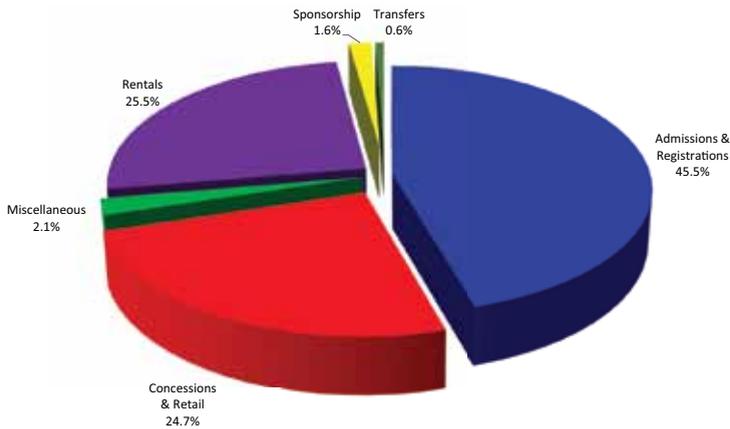
Operating Receipts - General Agency



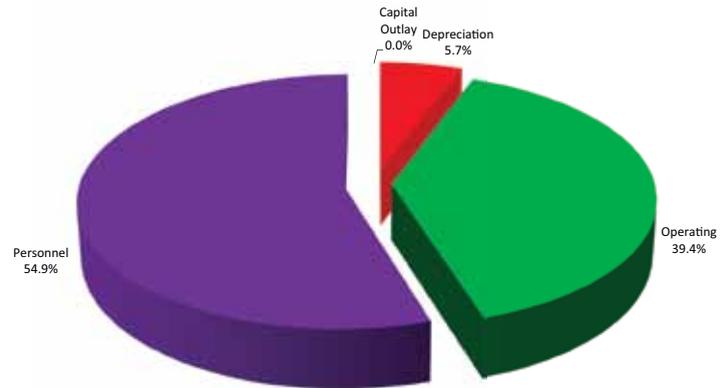
Operating Expenditures - General Agency



Operating Receipts - Enterprise Funds



Operating Expenditures - Enterprise Funds



Welcome Home Heroes

For all they do for our country, service men and women of the United States military deserve everything we can give them. CCPRC partnered with Cell Phones for Soldiers to have our parks be collection sites for used cell phones donated by the community. The phones were then converted into international calling cards for military personnel stationed outside of the U.S. to use to call home. The two-month collection drive generated over 250 devices.

Integrating back into civilian life can be difficult, so for many dedicated members of the military who returned home from deployment, we provided a day of fun and exhilaration. In August 2013, over 180 marines from the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort spent the day at James Island County Park, engaging in challenging and spirited activities intended to boost morale and alleviate stress. These men and women rotated through activities including: the park's Challenge Course, the Climbing Wall, kayaking, stand up paddleboarding, mountain biking, disc golf, and slacklining. Welcome home heroes.



*Marines at the Challenge Course,
James Island County Park*



McLeod Ground Breaking

Freedom Fighters

CCPRC acquired the McLeod Plantation from the Historic Charleston Foundation in 2011. In April 2014, CCPRC broke ground to renovate the site on James Island and plans to open the historic site to the public in the spring of 2015.

For many former plantations in the South, the typical visitor experience emphasizes incredible architecture, massive land and tree formations, priceless antiques, and stories of the privileged antebellum lifestyles of the owners and their families. It is easy to leave a plantation overlooking an important aspect of plantation life - the enslaved people.

The McLeod Plantation Historic Site is not only a park but a sacred place to visit. The experience will acknowledge and honor all people who lived at the site but will focus on the lives of hundreds of African-Americans who created the wealth that was enjoyed by the McLeods before and after slavery. Special attention will be given to the transition to freedom of the enslaved, as well as to the site's connections to the Freedmen's Bureau, U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War, The Great Migration, and other nationally important topics not often heard by Charleston residents or tourists.

The Super Stars

For many people, access to physical fitness and recreation is not as simple as jumping into a pool or gliding off in a kayak. Some people require a little extra time and adaptation to participate in “traditional recreation.” Through the AccessABILITY program, Charleston County Parks work to make recreation available for these underserved populations - those with physical limitations and other special needs. In October 2013, CCPRC partnered with the American Canoe Association to host an Adaptive Paddling Workshop. Special Needs Swim Night debuted in May 2014, and hosted 249 people for a nighttime event at Whirlin’ Waters Adventure Waterpark.

“Just wanted to say thank you sooo much for holding the special needs night swim last night. My son had a blast, he actually made a couple of friends which is highly unusual. It was sooo relaxing and fun there. I really hope you do this again next year.” **Special Needs Swim Night Parent**



*Special Needs Swim Night,
Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark*



*yo-SUP Class,
James Island County Park*

Healthy South Carolinians

No gym is more inspiring, relaxing, energizing, and beautiful than the one available in the great outdoors. With that in mind, Charleston County Parks introduced a new series of programs encouraging outdoor fitness in the fall of 2013. “We want to encourage people to embrace the outdoors with their workouts,” CCPRC’s Fitness and Wellness Program Manager Allison Foster said. The new lineup of fitness programming in the parks included several yoga-inspired classes like Yoga in the Park and Walk and Restore, plus Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) fitness classes like i-SUP and yo-SUP. Patrons also took to the waterparks’ pools to try out water-based fitness through H2O Moves and HIIT the Water (High Intensity Interval Training). Short Circuit programs offered a lunchtime aerobic workout.

“Thank you so much for your enthusiasm, positive narrative, and making the exchange of so much knowledge fun! I took away more from this course than I expected and feel excited to work hard and move forward! Great teaching job!” **SUP Participant**

Next Door Neighbors

In February 2014, CCPRC welcomed Community Recreation facilities and staff as the agency formally absorbed this program previously run with the Charleston County School District. Now, three rural area recreation complexes are staffed and managed by CCPRC: Johns Island (with programs at Haut Gap Recreation Complex, Angel Oak Elementary School, and St. Johns High School); Baptist Hill/Hollywood (with programs at Schroder-Blaney Recreation Complex and Baptist Hill High School); and McClellanville (with programs at St. James Santee Recreation Complex, Thompson Hill Playground, and Lincoln High School). CCPRC was excited to reach out to these rural areas with great new programming ventures for children and families!



Kids at Schroder-Blaney Recreation Complex



The Dog Park at James Island County Park

Just the Dog-Gone Best

In February 2014, CCPRC was honored to receive the inaugural Ambassador Award from the Charleston Animal Society (CAS). CCPRC and CAS have thrived as partners for many years, with CAS providing support and helping to grow events like Pet Fest and Yappy Hour. In 2013, CAS also began holding dog training classes at Palmetto Islands County Park and James Island County Park, and recognized the importance of CCPRC's dog parks in serving local pet owners. CAS has become a model for the nation and the pride of South Carolina by becoming the first No Kill Community in the Southeastern United States. The CAS applauded CCPRC's efforts to promote healthy lifestyles between owners and their pets, and, more importantly, providing numerous opportunities to engage in those lifestyles, while acting as a leader for other organizations and businesses in our community.

A Fish Finally in Water

On June 20, 2014, four CCPRC sites joined forces with tens of thousands of kids and adults at aquatic facilities around the world in an effort to set a new Guinness World Record™. The global record was broken that day for The World's Largest Swimming Lesson™ (WLSL). CCPRC offered swimming lessons to summer camp participants at Splash Island, Splash Zone, and Whirlin' Waters waterparks, as well as at the Schroder-Blaney Recreation Complex. Research shows participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by 88% among children aged 1 to 4, and this world-wide lesson helped raise awareness for the need for children to learn to swim.



*The World's Largest Swimming Lesson,
Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark*



Kristi Murray
5:30 Reception
Wed. ticketed hour
1/25 appet
1/25 fresh burgers
1/25 drinks
1/25 food opens
200 spaces
\$10 drink/refreshing
\$5 Baking tray
\$30 story lamp
\$100 50% off

Our Distinguished Guests

Charleston County Parks now holds over 10,000 acres of property. Many of these acres are future parklands that are largely undeveloped and not yet open to the public. However, this year, the public was allowed several sneak peeks of their future parks through special events. The Lake House at Bulow and Old Towne Creek County Park became open and accessible for rentals for parties, weddings, and other group functions. Wine Down Wednesday opened up to the public for wine tastings and socializing. And it also opened its gates as part of Be Fit Charleston!, a family fitness festival that debuted in June.

From a shelter renter at James Island County Park:

“On behalf of the 2013 Smith Family Planning Committee, please accept a sincere thank you for the service you have provided for our very first family reunion. The facility (Edisto Shelter) and grounds produced the down-home friendly atmosphere that was loved by one and all, not to mention the modern amenities for comfort and convenience. Family near and far found this to be an enjoyable experience. “

Submitted by: Sonia Glover, Committee Coordinator

Delighters of the Feast

For years, the Holiday Festival of Lights has offered discounted admission on select nights for patrons who bring non-perishable food items for donation. In 2013, the festival upped the ante by offering a deeper discount and providing it on additional event nights, with the goal of collecting 10,000 pounds of food. This goal was well exceeded in 2013, with park-goers donating 15,177 pounds of canned goods for the Lowcountry Food Bank. These generous donations were able to provide food for 12,648 meals to those in need in the Charleston area.



*Food Collection Bin at
the Holiday Festival of Lights*



Donald Bailey (Right)

The Can-Do Workforce

This year, CCPRC's CORE Value Diversity Committee created an Employees with Disabilities Advisory Panel to establish job descriptions and positions for employees with disabilities. CCPRC also partnered with the College of Charleston's REACH (Realizing Educational and Career Hopes) program to bring on an intern to oversee the agency's practices.

A shining example, Donald Bailey is a graduate of the University of South Carolina's Carolina Life Program. This program offers young adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to realize their dreams of receiving a college education. Five South Carolina colleges offer programs that deliver the full college experience and the lifelong benefits that go with it. Donald was hired by CCPRC as a maintenance assistant. His mother Carolina Bailey said, "He was the one who really got himself the jobs that he has now. He is working two jobs so his time is well spent. He does drive his own car and he is able to live on his own. I don't think it gets any better than that."

We also have a wonderful volunteer with cognitive limitations who has been with CCPRC for 10 years and has won the Volunteer of the Year award several times. Her contribution to the workforce has been invaluable.

The Guard of My Life

On May 8, 2014 something very important happened at our agency. It was not a ground breaking, the opening of a new park, the acquisition of new property, or even the formation of a new partnership. It was much more. It was a promise to keep the community safe that was upheld by one of our staff members.

That afternoon our agency began receiving calls from the media about an incident at the Isle of Palms beach. A group of five young people went for a swim, got caught in a rip current, and were in serious trouble. Since it was early in the season, there were no lifeguards on duty. One of our capable and courageous employees upheld the promise the agency made to the community and went fully clothed into the dangerous waters to rescue them. With the help of the Isle of Palms Fire Department, all five swimmers were brought to safety unharmed. This CCPRC employee kept our promise to keep park-goers safe and saved five young lives that day. We thank her.

Another lifeguard testimonial:

*My name is John Ezekiel and I was at IOP County Park on Saturday (7/27/13) with my wife and kids on a weekend vacation. Unfortunately – our day of beach fun ended too soon due to me getting stung by a stingray. I just wanted to let you know that the lifeguard staff and EMS staff (specifically lifeguards Patrick/Ryan) were great with assisting first aid to me. Please let them know I appreciate all of their help and I would recommend everyone when going to the beach to go to IOP County Park due to the great staff. The injury was definitely one my family will not forget but we were still able to enjoy our weekend. Again, I appreciate the help the staff gave me and thanks to Patrick/Ryan! Many thanks— **Isle of Palms County Park patron***





a child will drown this summer

Let's change that.

THE GENESIS PROJECT

TheParklandsFoundation.org



In Memory of...

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death for children under the age of 14. Here in the Lowcountry, where we are surrounded by water and tides rise quickly, it's a major concern. CCPRC has always made strides to be involved with swim safety - from lifeguarding our beaches, to becoming involved with the portable pool program in rural locations last year. We even provided four host sites for the World's Largest Swimming Lesson this past summer. But this year, *The Parklands Foundation took it a step further by introducing The Genesis Project.

This new initiative is named for Genesis Holmes, a 13-year-old who drowned in a pond in the Hollywood community in May 2014. Genesis, like many other people in Charleston County, did not know how to swim. The goal of The Genesis Project is to build permanent pool facilities in a variety of rural areas in Charleston County in order to provide swim lesson opportunities for many people who don't otherwise have access to them. For more information on The Genesis Project, visit TheParklandsFoundation.org.

**The Parklands Foundation is the nonprofit organization created in 1990 by Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission to generate funding for the continued growth and development of the county park system.*

