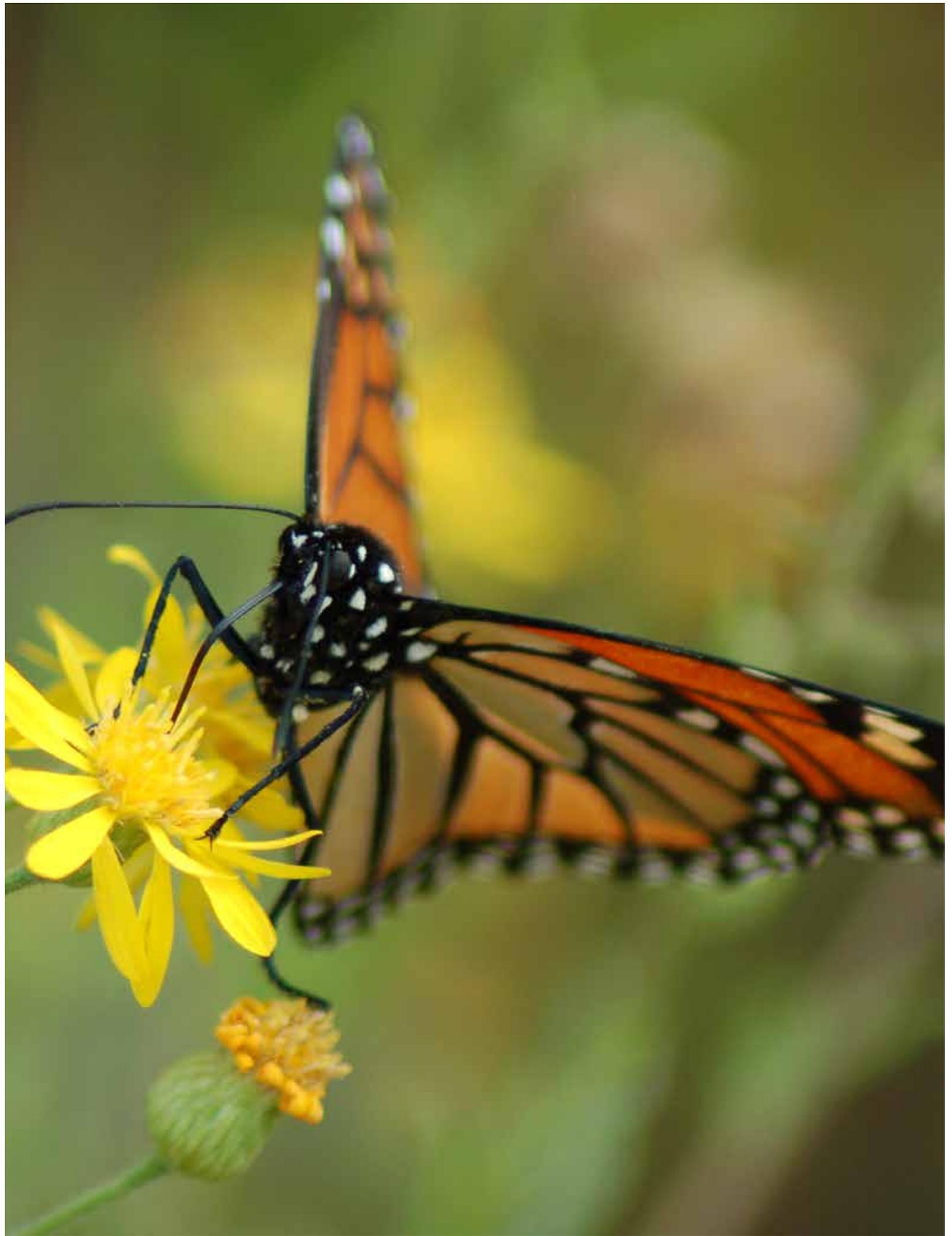


2016 - 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

AWARDS. PARKS. EVENTS.



CHARLESTONCOUNTYPARKS.COM



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Charleston County Residents:

Since 2001, it has been the agency's mission and my personal commitment to improve the quality of life for Charleston County residents by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. As I look back on the 2016-2017 fiscal year, it will always be remembered as my last year as executive director of Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission. This year truly captures almost all that I wanted to accomplish at the parks, from expanding the parks system to enhancing existing parks, to developing new enriching programs and entertaining special events, all while having fun along the way. This annual report summarizes our most notable strides to fulfill that mission. Our 11,000-acre park system had about 2.6 million visitors this year, which was a 5% increase over the previous year.



Tom O'Rourke

We opened a 32,500-square-foot skate park facility named SK8 Charleston after many years of planning and development. The community response and excitement over the new park was electrifying. We also invested in developing the Johns Island County Park with a six target archery range in order to broaden the appeal of this park beyond the equestrian community. Our programming received national recognition when we hosted a seven-day workshop at James Island County Park designed by the Smithsonian's National Museum of African-American History and Culture to encourage new ways to interpret African-American history. The Hops and Vines special event debut in the spring at the McLeod Plantation Historic Site brought people together to enjoy live music and refreshments with the opportunity to learn about the rich history of this site.

We will always assess the needs of the community and find ways Charleston County Parks can better serve the Lowcountry in a meaningful way. This is why in recent years we have redirected our focus on The Parklands Foundation that we founded in 1990. This year we not only created opportunities to raise money for the foundation like the Patron Series, we also made the commitment to build a pool in Hollywood, SC, where no public pool exists. There is so much work to be done with the foundation that I have transitioned over to be the executive director of The Parklands Foundation going forward.



David Bennett

My successor will be David Bennett who assumed the executive director position for Charleston County Parks in March of 2017 and has worked in various leadership roles here for more than 30 years. In many ways the transition has been very seamless to the staff and the public, which speaks to the strength of the agency. I hope that all those who have visited our park system and enjoyed their time here will always feel they are welcomed and that their memories linger beyond their visits. I know my memories of being in the parks and working here will stay with me always. Thank you for the opportunity, and more importantly, the honor and privilege to serve the community in this capacity. I am enormously grateful.



Agency Overview

The large park system features over 11,000 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, skate park, 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 (CCPRC) will improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs, and services.

Vision Statement

To be distinguished as a nationally accredited and financially sustainable park and recreation agency through our commitment to preserving our natural, historical and cultural resources, offering a clean, safe, and exceptional visitor experience that is accessible to all.

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



Mattese Lecque
Chair



Andrew Thomas
Vice-Chair



Teddy Manos
Secretary-Treasurer



Lisa S. King



Ravi Sanyal



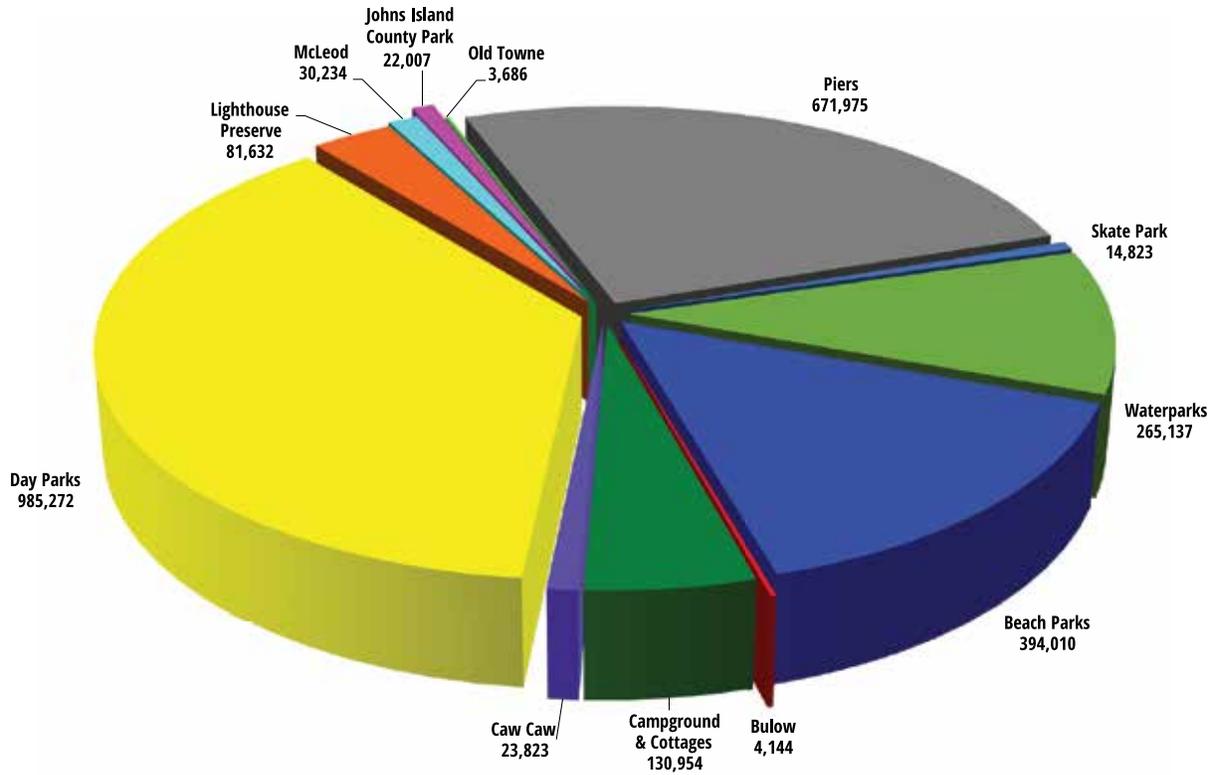
Collin Bruner



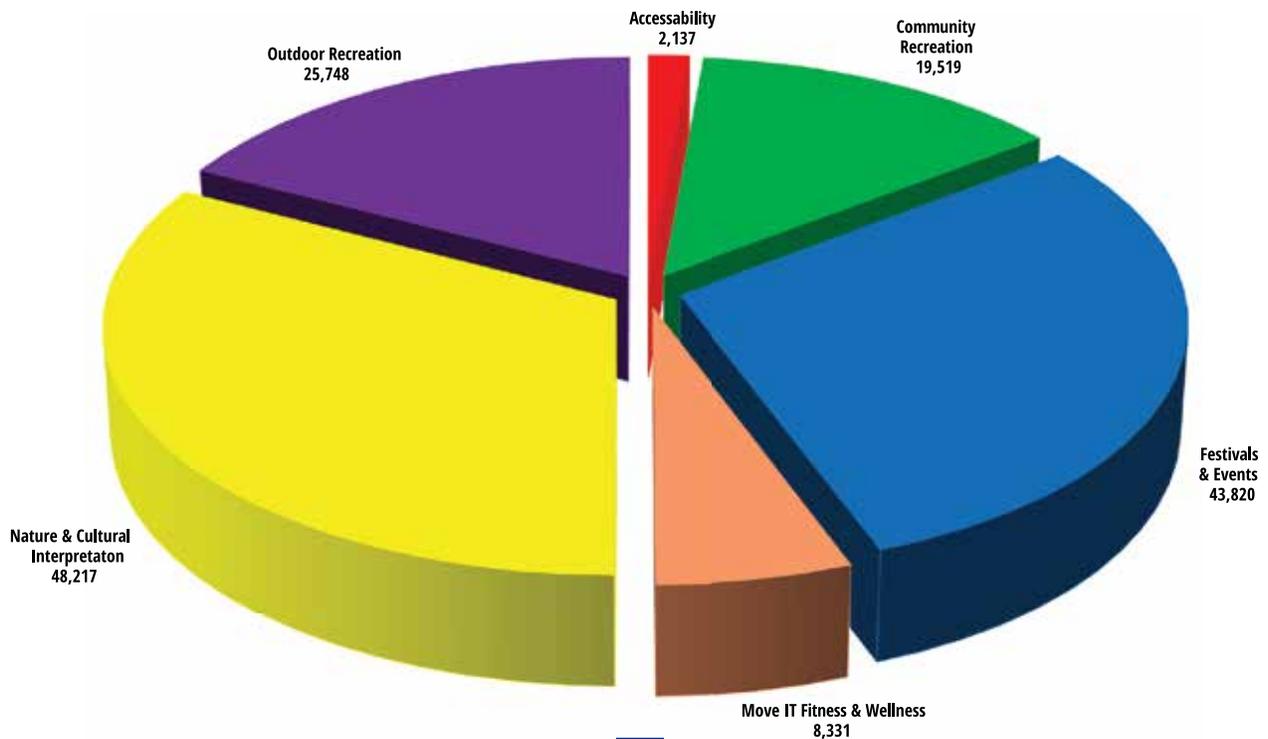
Benjy Cooke

Patrons at Play

Park and Facility Attendance
FY 16-17
Total: 2,627,697

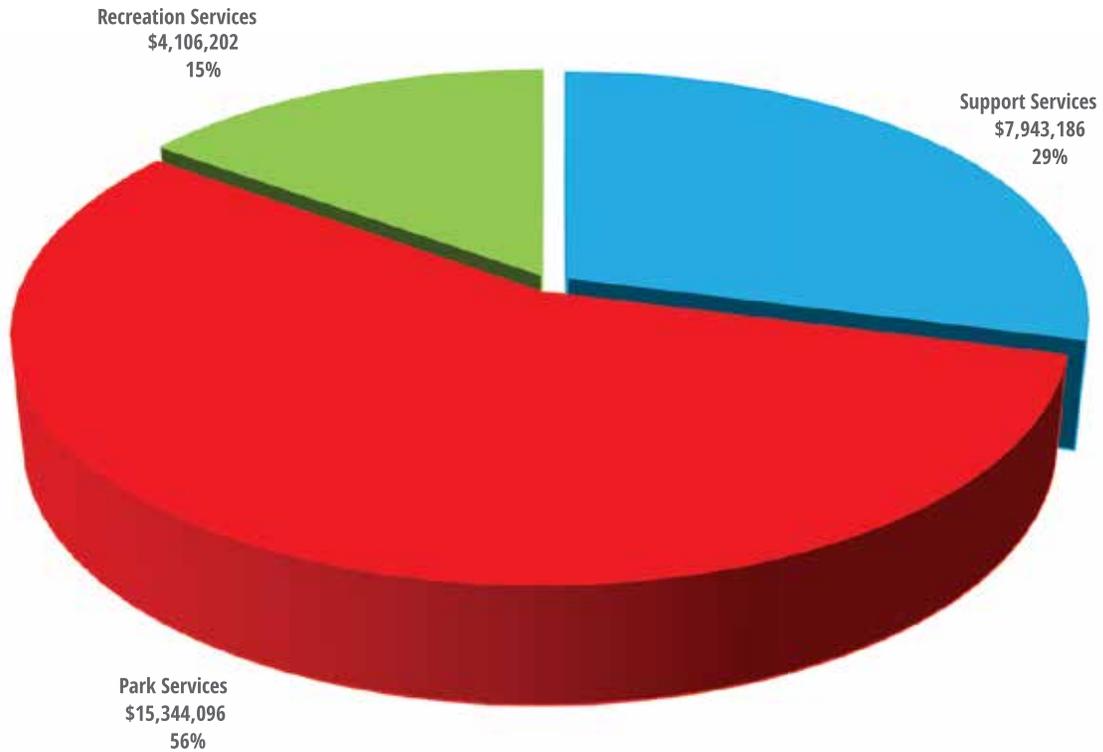


Special Events and Program Attendance
FY 16-17
147,772

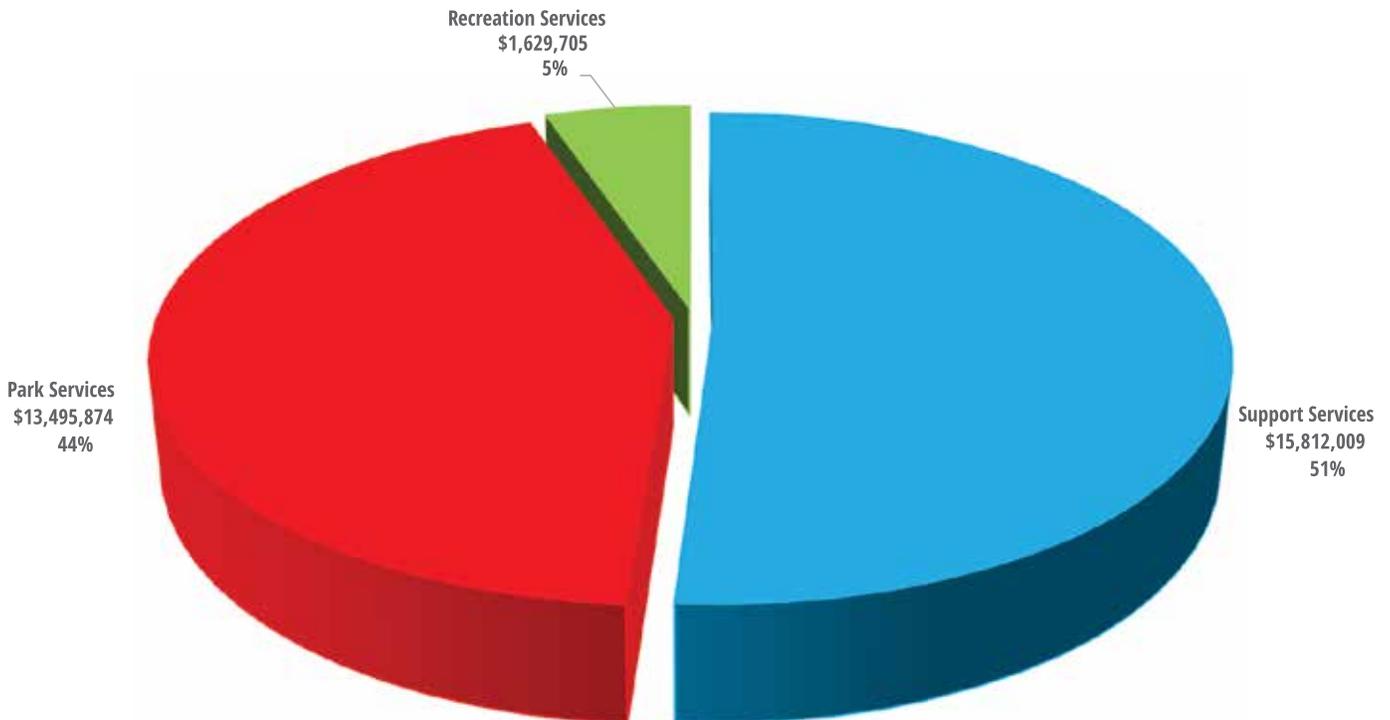


Your Dollars at Work

Expenditures FY 16/17 \$27,393,484



Receipts FY 16/17 \$30,937,588





*Charleston Collegiate's Archery Team
at Johns Island County Park*



Johns Island County Park

Park Rebranding

In an effort to transform the image of the park from an event facility to a park with features that could be used on a daily basis, Mullet Hall Equestrian Center recently underwent a name rebranding to Johns Island County Park. The park was traditionally known as a facility that catered mostly to horse owners and equestrian events, and this rebranding was to showcase the many other amenities that the park offers to the general public. The reworking of the master plan for Johns Island County Park is also underway, further prompting these efforts. The brand campaign aims to invest in enhancing and adding new features to the park for daily use, to expand park programs and events offered, to market the site as a recreational park and rental venue, and to increase attendance.

Potential future plans for the site include a disc golf course, off-leash dog park, improved trail access, and more.

Archery Range Grand Opening

Johns Island County Park proudly opened a new outdoor archery range in February. The range, accessible on the trailhead side of the park for an admission fee of just \$1 per person, features six targets ranging from 10 yards to 50 yards in distance. An official opening ceremony was held on March 5 that included demonstrations by Charleston Collegiate's archery club. The range is open daily from sunrise to sunset.



Cultural, Historical and Social Happenings

Wayside Exhibits Honored

The National Association for Interpretation awarded McLeod Plantation Historic Site as having the nation's best wayside exhibits. McLeod's wayside exhibits, which are outdoor interpretive signs located along walkways, focus on a variety of topics related to the Transition to Freedom theme. Judges selecting the award winner for the National Association for Interpretation commented that the exhibits "help the audience to discover meanings, relate to personal experiences, and provoke further exploration of the stories after they have left the site," and one judge "loved the... highlighting of universal concepts to make visitors fully connect to the story."

Nationally recognized workshop hosted by CCPRC

CCPRC Interpretation staff presented a seven-day workshop made possible by a partnership with the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Association of African American Museums, and The National Association for Interpretation. The 32-hour program, held at James Island County Park, was designed to inspire excellence in the interpretation of African American history and culture and provide professional development. Participants also visited McLeod Plantation Historic Site along with other area sites and museums, and those who completed the program received a National Association for Interpretation certification. Attendees throughout the country from as far away as Los Angeles came to Charleston County. They represent a diverse group of museums and historic sites, ranging from the Harlem Studio Museum in New York to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in Alabama.



*Hops & Vines at McLeod Plantation
Historic Site*



Cultural, Historical and Social Happenings

(continued)

Hops and Vines Event debuts

McLeod Plantation Historic Site introduced a new evening event in April. Featuring live music, beer, wine and a food truck, the event was named Hops and Vines. Interpreters were available to illustrate the storied history of the plantation, bringing the legacy of the site to a new audience.

McLeod Plantation Historic Site Arts Series

McLeod Plantation Historic Site also debuted an art series in early 2017. The historic plantation hosted “American Gullah - Painting of a People and a Place” with artist Sonja Griffin Evans in March, featuring a two-day exhibition of her American Gullah collection. In April, the Lowcountry Voices choral group hosted their second annual concert at McLeod. The series continued in May with a guided painting program hosted by Sonja Griffin Evans, and on June 18 with a poetry reading and book signing by author Kendra Hamilton.



Promotions

Adding value and fun

In July, several favorite cartoon characters stopped by the waterparks to visit with children and parents alike! Spongebob Squarepants returned to Whirlin' Waters for his second year. Scooby Doo and the gang stopped by Splash Zone and Bugs Bunny was on hand at Splash Island! Visits were free with waterpark admission.

Welcome to The Outdoor Zone

A popular recreational area of James Island County Park received a new name and branding in November. The climbing wall, challenge course, slack line and disc golf course area was named the Outdoor Zone, complete with signage near the parking lot. The park's climbing wall has been on site since 1997 and this was the first time this part of the park had been named.



Scooby Doo at Splash Zone





SK8 Charleston

Grand Opening

After many years as a wish and a vision, CCPRC opened the highly-anticipated SK8 Charleston in March. The 32,500-square-foot facility features a 200-foot-long snake run, an 11.5-foot-deep pro bowl, a seven-foot-deep intermediate bowl, and a 315-foot-long street course. Located conveniently in the northern Charleston peninsula and overlooking the Ashley River, the park is open for skateboarding, quads and in-line skates Wednesday through Monday, and BMX riders can use the park on Tuesdays. The facility features a building with a large viewing deck, a small skate shop, restrooms, seating, and food and drink concessions. Opening events on March 4 and 11 included live music, giveaways, best trick contests and skateboarding demonstrations.

Partners in the project included skate park advocacy group Pour It Now, Hightower Construction, designer Team Pain Skate Parks, SGA Architecture, A-E-COM, and Terracon. The Speedwell Foundation and the City of Charleston provided financial contributions.

“The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission has always looked to provide world-class facilities for the public we serve,” said Executive Director Tom O’Rourke. “SK8 Charleston is the next in a long line of great facilities.”

“The Charleston County area has been waiting a long time for the opportunity to enjoy a facility like this. We are all as excited about the opening of this park as any facility we have opened.”



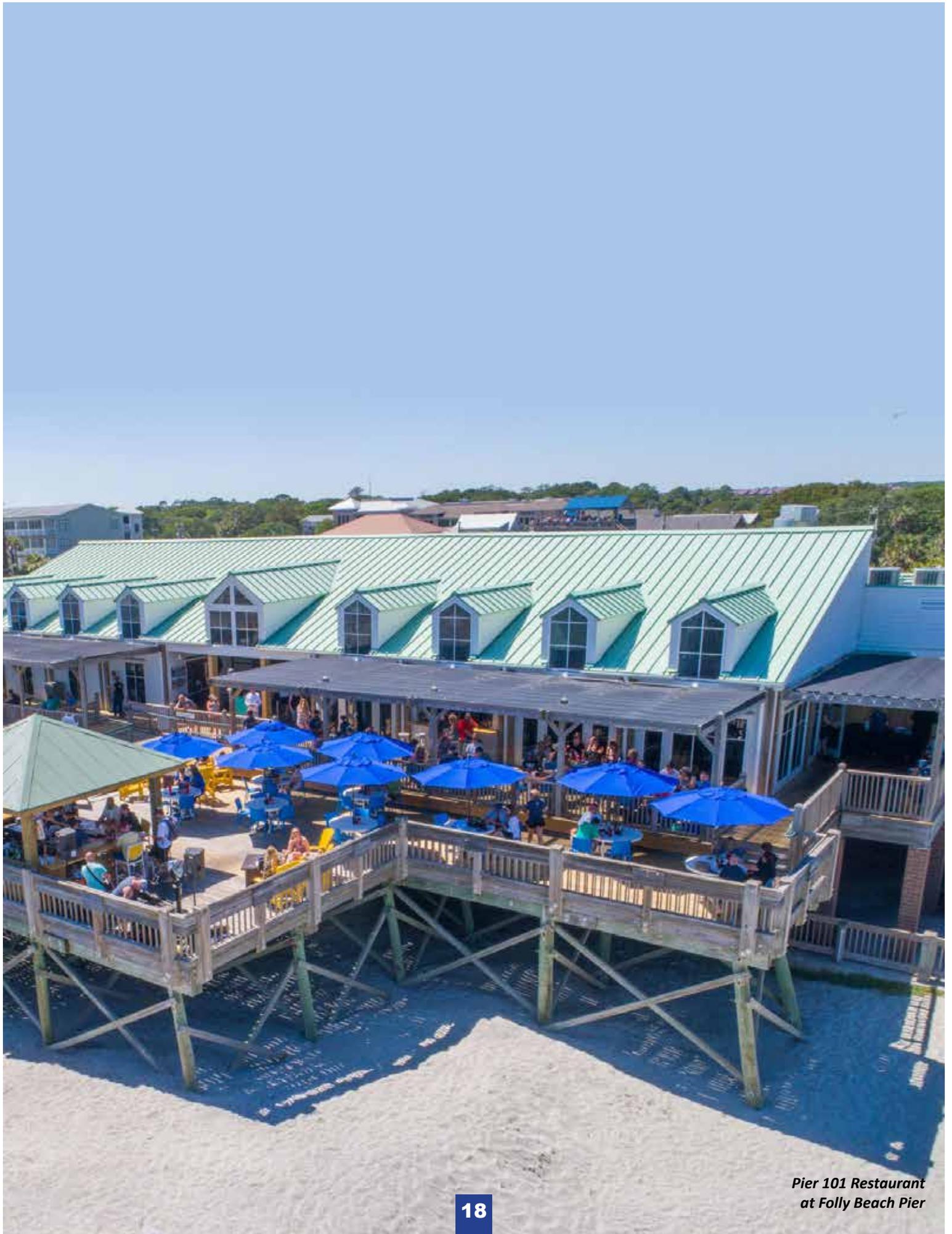
New Partnerships

Pier 101 Restaurant

Following the issuance of an RFP, Charleston County Parks accepted a proposal for a new restaurant operator at the Folly Beach Pier. Locklear's Beach City Grill closed on Oct. 23, and The Tides Folly Beach hotel group, 1 Center Street LLC, then took possession of the property. The Pier 101 restaurant opened in the same location in early 2017, featuring a menu of American and Southern dishes, as well as seafood options, for pier patrons and beach-goers. The new restaurant's theming also offers a nostalgic nod to the history of Folly Beach and its piers.

The MVPs

At the opening of the 27th Annual Holiday Festival of Lights, which occurred on Veteran's Day, Charleston County Parks debuted the Military and Veterans in the Parks (MVP) program. To honor current and former members of the military, guests with military ID received discounted admission, American flags were distributed, and randomly-selected guests received the annual festival ornament. The Lowcountry Powerbrass band performed patriotic and holiday music in Santa's Village. Throughout the year, current members of the military and veterans received discounted pier fishing rates, campground discounts and more as part of the MVP program. The program also launched efforts to recruit and hire military members and veterans at CCPRC.



*Pier 101 Restaurant
at Folly Beach Pier*



*The Parklands Foundation
Unforgettable Evening at McLeod Plantation Historic Site*



The Parklands

The Parklands Foundation Patron Series

The Parklands Foundation continued its Patron Series this year with three ticketed events: An Unforgettable Evening at McLeod, which offered a historical tour and dinner at the site; a VIP experience on opening night of the Holiday Festival of Lights that featured a dinner and various event festivities; and a sunset cruise aboard the Palmetto Breeze. All three events raised funds to support projects of The Parklands Foundation.

Location Established for a New Rural Pool

This year, the decision was made to construct a permanent pool facility in the Hollywood, SC area. Charleston County Parks will fund the construction and maintenance of the facility, which will be the town's only public pool facility. The Parklands Foundation will fund the pool's swimming instruction and programming, thus focusing the vision of the foundation's Genesis Project. The Genesis Project was named after young Genesis Holmes, who was unable to swim and drowned in a Hollywood pond in 2014. The project aims to eliminate the number of drowning occurrences in the rural areas of Charleston County, and programming at the Hollywood-area pool will make strides in teaching area residents how to swim.

Pennies from Heaven

Following the drowning of Genesis Holmes, Troy Hamilton decided to honor his cousin by raising money to teach others to swim. The fourth grader began collecting pennies in mason jars; the project started out small but over time, collection jars were out at many Hollywood-area businesses, churches and even Roper St. Francis Hospital. People were inspired by Troy's ability to transform the tragic death of his cousin into something positive. Soon, pennies turned into over \$500, and the collections continue with the involvement of more businesses. "It was as if the pennies were coming from heaven," said Troy.



Hurricane Matthew

Overcoming Hurricane Matthew

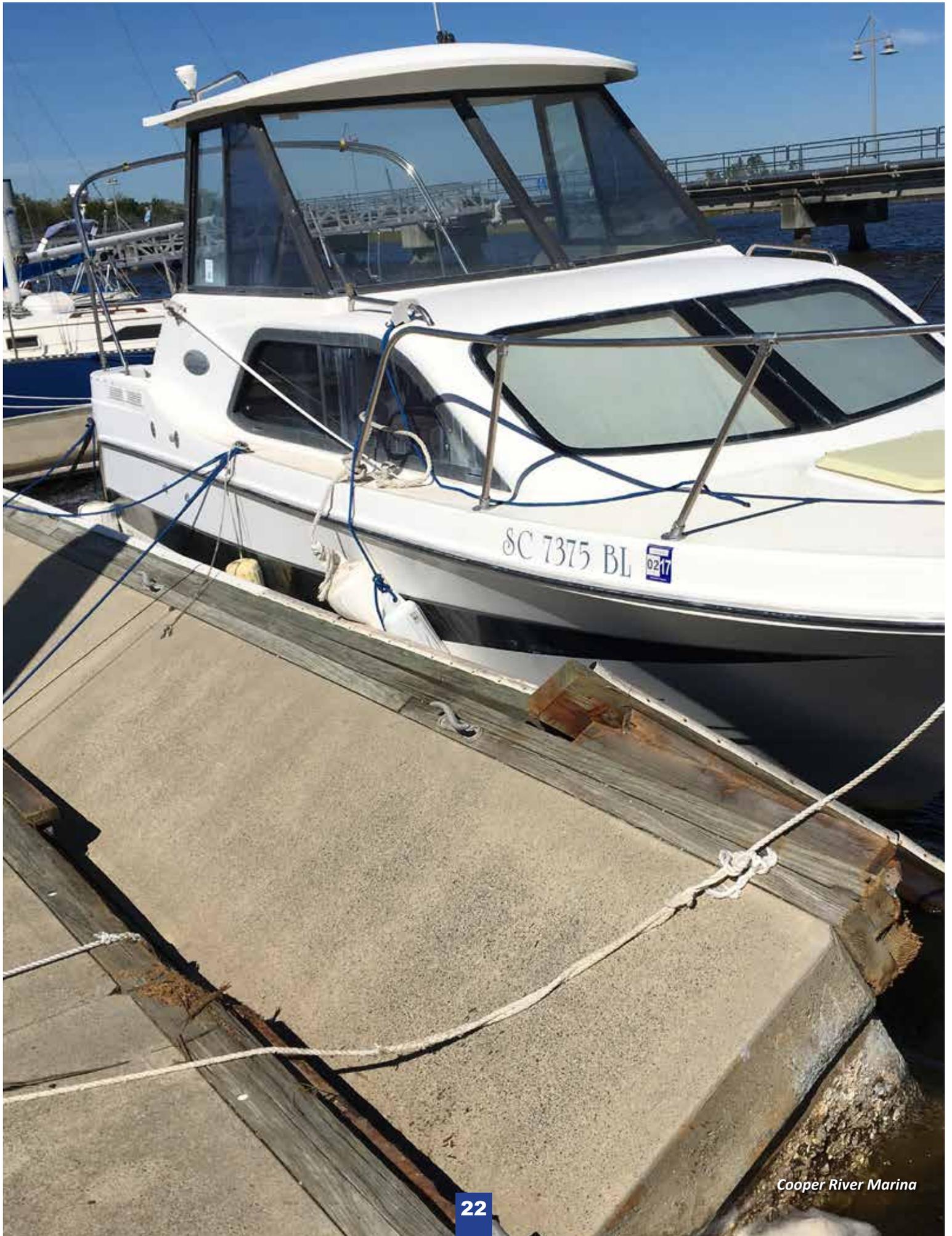
In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew hit north of Charleston County as a category 1 storm. CCPRC staff quickly followed park Emergency Action Plans, and fortunately the Charleston area did not sustain as much damage as was originally predicted. And thanks to much planning and hard work, most park facilities bounced back quickly.

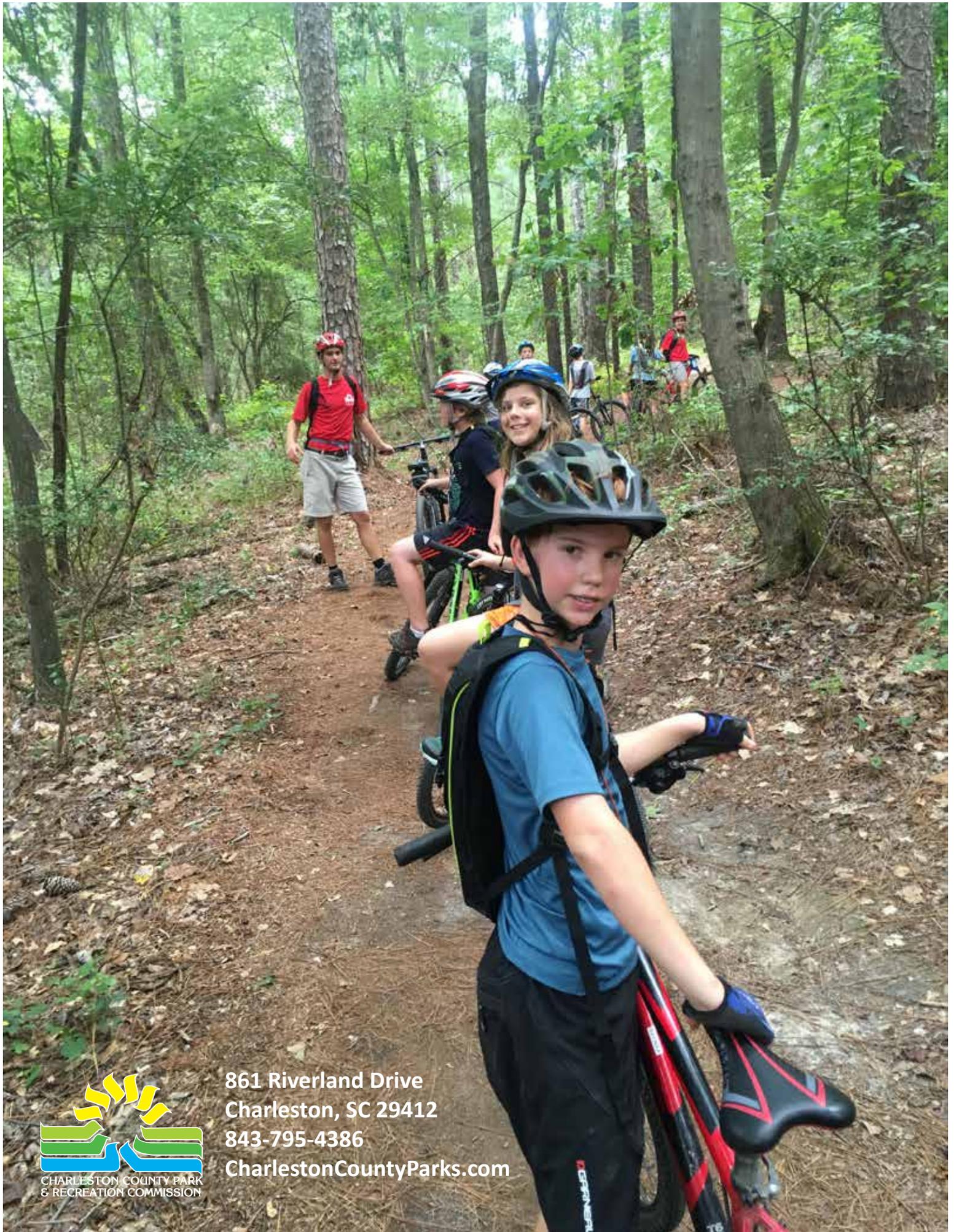
All CCPRC parks have a storm preparedness plan to minimize damage to structures and to facilitate post-storm assessment and clean-up. Staff accessed all park properties within 24 hours of Hurricane Matthew's landfall to conduct an assessment and identify damages.

Most parks were back open within 3 days after the storm. CCPRC has a debris removal and structural evaluation contingency with a contracted vendor in place, ready to activate after natural disasters, but for this storm, most of the cleanup was conducted by CCPRC's capable and well-equipped staff. The facilities that sustained the most damage were Johns Island County Park due to flooding and downed trees, which impeded cleanup efforts, and Old Towne Creek County Park, which suffered the loss of several large trees.

Folly Beach County Park's terminal groin performed as designed, minimizing damage to that park by retaining beach sand and protecting dunes.

Edisto Island was one of the hardest-hit portions of the county. CCPRC was also able to assist with a county-wide cleanup effort by designating our Edisto property as a collection and burn site for vegetative debris.





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